

SCIENCE FICTION

ANC.

25¢

Quarterly

FEB. 1955

NO TIME FOR CHANGE

by CHARLES
V. DeVET

POSSESSION

by L. SPRAGUE de CAMP

ALL NEW
STORIES



DOUBLE-ACTION
MAGAZINE

\$35,000

BONUS OFFERED BY THE U. S. GOVERNMENT FOR

***URANIUM** FOUND ANYWHERE!

ON YOUR FARM!

OWN BACKYARD!

BEFORE SELLING
YOUR LAND
Explore for Uranium
at this nominal cost.
It may be worth
millions!

WHILE FISHING

WHILE ON VACATION

IT'S EASY! NOW

YOU CAN FIND URANIUM!

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME AN
EXTREMELY LOW COST, LIGHT -
WEIGHT GIEGER COUNTER
SHAPED AND HELD LIKE A
FLASHLIGHT!

CAMPING

Openings in case increase
the sensitivity of the in-
strument for Beta rays so
that .01% Uranium can be
detected in rock!

Shoulder strap carrying
case with batteries and 30'
extension cord affords suf-
ficient "play" to insert be-
tween rocks, under crev-
ices, etc.

THIS IS NO TOY!
IT IS A SENSITIVE
SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENT—
YET A CHILD CAN
USE IT TO FIND
GREAT WEALTH!

**HOW
COME THIS VALUE**

This is a real Geiger Counter, the same kind of scientific instrument which usually sells for \$50 to \$500. Never before has a genuine Geiger Counter been offered at this low price. This sensational value is made possible only because we mass produce our own Geiger tubes by a new process — the heart of the instrument.

***ATOMIC ENERGY
COMMISSION**
offer due to national
defense need of Uranium.

HOW IT WORKS

When you hold the Geiger Counter near URANIUM the built in light flashes rapidly on and off. This indicates at once that radioactive wealth is near! You need no special talent or knowledge to use it. It is very light — only $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. — rugged and reliable.

**WHERE
URANIUM IS FOUND**

Uranium may be found practically anywhere — in any of the 48 states! Fishermen! It is especially prevalent around shores of lakes, rivers, etc. It can be found in any type of rock and detected normally only by a Geiger Counter. The Atomic Energy Commission will test ore samples for you FREE.

GIEGER COUNTER

ONLY
FOR
GIEGER
COUNTER

FOR CARRYING \$4.95
CASE AND BATTERIES
SATISFACTION GUARANTEED
OR MONEY REFUNDED!

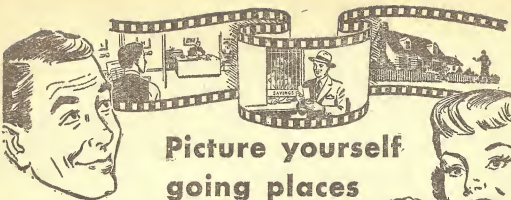
Radiation from Uranium is observed by Neon bulb flickering light in Aluminum Corrosion resistant case of attractive Blue Hammer tone finish can be easily seen on brightest day.

GET YOURS TODAY!

U. S. GIEGER CO., 195 SACKETT ST., B'KLYN 31, N. Y., Dept. DA
Please RUSH me the following checked items:

- ☐ Geiger Counter—\$9.95 ☐ Carrying Case & Batteries—\$4.95
☐ COMPLETE KIT as above—\$14.75
☐ \$1 Deposit Enclosed. I will pay balance C.O.D. plus postage. ☐ Full Payment Enclosed. Please ship postpaid.

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____



Picture yourself going places

You've done it often. Call it day-dreaming if you like, but you've seen yourself in a bigger job—giving orders and making decisions—driving off in a smart new car—buying your family a fine home.

There's nothing wrong with dreams. But how about making them come true? You can do it, if you're willing to try!

Look around you. The men who are going places are the trained men. They've learned

special skills that bring them better jobs and higher pay. It's the men without training whose dreams never come true.

What are you going to do about it? Just wait and wish? If you really want to succeed, you can get the training you need by studying at home in your spare time. International Correspondence Schools offer you a course in just about any field you choose, giving you the practical plus the bedrock facts and theory. No skimming or skimping! And you'll be earning while you learn. Students report better jobs and more pay within a few months.

Look over the list of subjects in the coupon below. Pick out the one that interests you most—the one that holds the greatest future for you. Then mark the coupon, and mail it today. Find out what I. C. S. can do for you. It costs only a stamp or postcard, but it's the first step if you want to go places!



SMARTEST THING HE EVER DID

"I noticed that the trained men held the better jobs. That's when I decided to take an I. C. S. course. Enrolling with I. C. S. was one of the smartest things I ever did. The position as Plant Engineer I hold today is largely due to the 'know-how' derived from my I. C. S. texts. I, C. S., can help any man who will study."

L. F. B., Moberg, Ind.

FREE BOOKS

1. 36-page, pocket-size guide to advancement "How to Succeed". 2. Big catalog on career that interests you. 3. Free sample lesson.

For Real Job Security—Get an I. C. S. Diploma!

I. C. S., Scranton 9, Penna.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

CS

BOX 5995-F SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

(Partial list of 277 courses)

Without cost or obligation, send me "HOW TO SUCCEED" and the opportunity booklet about the field BEFORE which I have marked X (plus sample lesson):

ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING CONSTRUCTION <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning—Refrig. <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture <input type="checkbox"/> Building Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Building Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/> Carpenter and Mill Work <input type="checkbox"/> Estimating <input type="checkbox"/> Heating <input type="checkbox"/> Painting Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Arch. Blueprints <input type="checkbox"/> Scaffolding ART <input type="checkbox"/> Cartooning <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Art <input type="checkbox"/> Fashion Illustrating <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine Illustrating <input type="checkbox"/> Show Card and Sign Lettering <input type="checkbox"/> Sketching and Painting AUTOMOTIVE <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Body Rebuilding <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Elec. Technician <input type="checkbox"/> Auto-Engine Tune Up <input type="checkbox"/> Automobile Mechanic	AVIATION <input type="checkbox"/> Aeronautical Engineering Jr. <input type="checkbox"/> Aircraft & Engine Mechanic BUSINESS <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping and Accounting <input type="checkbox"/> Business Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Business Correspondence <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Public Accounting <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Salesmanship <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Tax <input type="checkbox"/> Letter-writing Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Managing Small Business <input type="checkbox"/> Office Management <input type="checkbox"/> Retail Business Management <input type="checkbox"/> Sales Management <input type="checkbox"/> Stenographic-Secretarial <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management CHEMISTRY <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical Chemistry <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Chem. Lab. Technician <input type="checkbox"/> General Chemistry <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Gas Prod. & Trans. <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Process <input type="checkbox"/> Pulp and Paper Making	CIVIL, STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Construction Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Highway Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Street Blueprints <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping DRAFTING <input type="checkbox"/> Aircraft Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Mine Surveying and Mapping <input type="checkbox"/> Ship Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Drafting ELECTRICAL <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/> Electrician <input type="checkbox"/> Contracting <input type="checkbox"/> Lineman HIGH SCHOOL <input type="checkbox"/> Continental <input type="checkbox"/> Good English <input type="checkbox"/> High School Subjects <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	LEADERSHIP <input type="checkbox"/> Foremanship <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Supervision <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership and Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Personal-Labor Relations MECHANICAL AND SHOP <input type="checkbox"/> Gas—Electric Welding <input type="checkbox"/> Heat Treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Metalurgy <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Instrumentation <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Supervision <input type="checkbox"/> Machine Design-Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Machine Shop Inspection <input type="checkbox"/> Machine Shop Practice <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Control <input type="checkbox"/> Sailing Ship Blueprints <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet Metal Worker <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Design <input type="checkbox"/> Toolmaking RADIO, TELEVISION <input type="checkbox"/> Electronics <input type="checkbox"/> Practical Radio—TV Eng'g <input type="checkbox"/> Radio and TV Servicing <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Operating <input type="checkbox"/> Television—Technician	RAILROAD <input type="checkbox"/> Air Brakes <input type="checkbox"/> Car Inspector <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Locomotive <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Engineer <input type="checkbox"/> Section Foreman STEAM AND DIESEL POWER <input type="checkbox"/> Combustion Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel—Elec. <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Eng's <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Light and Power <input type="checkbox"/> Stationary Fireman <input type="checkbox"/> Stationary Steam Engineering TEXTILE <input type="checkbox"/> Carding and Spinning <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton, Rayon, Woolen Mfg. <input type="checkbox"/> Finishing and Dyeing <input type="checkbox"/> Loom Fixing <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Designing <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Eng'g <input type="checkbox"/> Throwing <input type="checkbox"/> Winding and Weaving MISCELLANEOUS <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Refrigeration <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Ocean Navigation <input type="checkbox"/> Shipbuilding <input type="checkbox"/> Short Story Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Telegraphy
--	---	---	---	--

Name _____ Age _____ Home Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____ Working Hours _____ A.M. to P.M. _____

Occupation _____

Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools, Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada. . . . Special tuition rates to members of the U. S. Armed Forces.

SCIENCE FICTION

Quarterly

ALL
STORIES
NEW

Volume 3

February, 1955

Number 4

FEATURED NOVEL

- NO TIME FOR CHANGE** Charles V. De Vet 6
As the time of troubles approached, assistance came secretly, from an unsuspected quarter; and Pariseau wondered if this was one mission too many.

SHORT STORIES

- THE FISSION OF MRS. CUSTER** Winston Marks 40
Hedda Custer was a lady — but "broad" would be a good word for her, too!
- POSSESSION** L. Sprague de Camp 51
Eric Wade had good reason not to enjoy cultivating the Rwon!
- GIANT IN THE FOREST** Frank Belknap Long 63
The people of this world were stricken with a consuming weariness . . .
- THE ADVENTURERS** C. M. Kornbluth 79
It was perhaps the most exclusive club left on Earth . . .

ARTICLE

- PERFECTION IS NO TRIFLE** Jay Tyler 59
Here's a subject that's always moot — what's wrong with science fiction?

READERS' DEPARTMENTS

- INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION** Robert A. Madle 48
- READIN' AND WRITHIN'** Damon Knight 75
- IT SAYS HERE** 83
- LETTERS** 93

ROBERT W. LOWNDES, *Editor*
MILTON LUROS, *Art Director*

DOROTHY B. SEADOR *Asso. Ed.*
MARIE A. PARK, *Asso. Ed.*

Cover by Frank Kelly Freas
illustrations by Freas, Hulsey, and Luros

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY, February, 1955, published February, May, August, and November, by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, INC., 1 Appleton Street, Holyoke, Mass. Editorial and executive offices at 241 Church Street, New York 13, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Holyoke, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Single copy 35¢; yearly subscription \$1.00. Entire contents copyright 1955 by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, INC. Manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed envelopes to insure return if not accepted, and while reasonable care will be extended in handling them, it is understood that they are submitted at author's risk. Printed in U. S. A.

You Practice SERVICING with Kits I Send You

Nothing takes the place of PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE. That's why NRI training is based on **LEARNING BY DOING**. You use parts I send to build many circuits common to Radio and Television. With my Servicing Course you build the modern Radio shown at left. You build a Multimeter and use it to help make \$10, \$15 a week fixing sets in spare time while training. All equipment is yours to keep. Coupon below will bring book of important facts. It shows other equipment you build.

You Practice BROADCASTING with Kits I Send You

As part of my Communications Course I send you parts to build low-power Broadcasting Transmitter at left. Use it to get practical experience. You put this station "on the air" . . . perform procedures demanded of broadcasting station operators. An FCC Commercial Operator's License can be your ticket to a bright future. My Communications Course trains you to get your license. Mail coupon. Book shows other equipment you build for practical experience.

I Will Train You at Home in Spare Time to be a RADIO-TELEVISION Technician

TELEVISION

Making Jobs, Prosperity

25 million homes have Television sets now. Thousands more sold every week. Trained men needed to make, install, service TV sets. About 200 television stations on the air. Hundreds more being built. Good job opportunities here for qualified technicians, operators, etc.



J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute
Washington, D. C.
Our 40th Year

America's Fast Growing Industry Offers You Good Pay, Success

Training PLUS opportunity is the PERFECT COMBINATION for job security, advancement. When times are good, the trained man makes the BETTER PAY, gets PROMOTED. When jobs are scarce, the trained man enjoys GREATER SECURITY. NRI training can help assure you and your family more of the better things of life. Radio is bigger than ever with over 3,000 broadcasting stations and more than 115 MILLION sets in use, and Television is moving ahead fast.

N.R.I. Training Leads to Good Jobs Like These

I TRAINED THESE MEN

"Am transmitter-studio operator at KPAT. Most important day of my life was when I enrolled with NRI."—Elmer Frewaldt, Madison, S. Dakota.

"Made my first \$100 from spare time work before I finished my course. Now I average better than \$10 a week, spare time."—Frank Bertr, Lorain, Ohio.

"I've come a long way in Radio and Television since graduating. Have my own business on Main Street."—Joe Travers, Ashbury Park, New Jersey.

"I didn't know a thing about Radio. Now have a good job at Studio Engineer at KMMI."—Bill Delsell, Central City, Nebraska.

BROADCASTING: Chief Technician, Chief Operator, Power Monitor, Recording Operator, Remote Control Operator. SERVICING: Home and Auto Radios, Television Receivers, FM Radios, P.A. Systems. IN RADIO PLANTS: Design Assistant, Technician, Tester, Serviceman, Service Manager. SHIP AND HARBOR RADIO: Chief Operator, Radio-Telephone Operator. GOVERNMENT RADIO: Operator in Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Forestry Service Dispatcher, Airways Radio Operator. AVIATION RADIO: Transmitter Technician, Receiver Technician, Airport Transmitter Operator. TELEVISION: Pick-up Operator, Television Technician, Remote Control Operator.

Start Soon to Make \$10, \$15 a Week Extra Fixing Sets

My training is practical, complete; is backed by 40 years of success training men at home. My well-illustrated lessons give you basic principles you need and my skillfully developed kits of parts "bring to life" things you learn from the lessons. I start sending you special booklets that show you how to fix sets the day you enroll. Multimeter you build with my parts helps you discover and correct set troubles, helps you make money fixing neighbors' sets in spare time while training. Many make \$10, \$15 a week extra this way.

Mail Coupon—Find Out What Radio-Television Offer You

Act now to get more of the good things of life. I send actual lesson to prove NRI home training is practical, thorough. My 64-page book "How to be a Success in Radio-Television" shows what my graduates are doing and earning. It gives important facts about your opportunities in Radio-Television. Take NRI training for as little as

**AVAILABLE
to all qualified
VETERANS
—UNDER G.I. BILLS—**

\$5 a month. Many graduates make more than the total cost of my training in two weeks. Mail coupon now to: J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 887, National Radio Institute, Washington 8, D. C. Our 40th year.

Good for Both—FREE

MR. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 887
National Radio Institute, Washington 8, D. C.
Mail me Sample Lesson and 64-page Book, FREE.
(No salesman will call. Please write plainly.)

Name.....Age.....
Address.....
City.....Zone.....State.....

VETS write in date of discharge.....



Mail Today—Tested Way to Better Pay



The smuggler's shots swept away the mechanical bloodhound's front legs . . .

The people of Ox II had thrown the empire-building Earthmen off their planet in the past. Now, when the great empire was decadent, men of Ox II were in its heart, undertaking a strange mission...

Featured Novel of Worlds To Come

NO TIME FOR CHANGE

by Charles V. De Vet

illustrated by Freas

GREAT drops of oily sweat traced a zigzag course through the black barbs of the smuggler's whiskers and brought a moist stinging to his cheeks. For six hours he had slogged through the semi-jungle underbrush in an effort to throw off his pursuers; now he cut sharply to his left and began pulling himself up the side of a steep bank. When he reached the top he let his tired body fall to the ground and lay flat, breathing deep into his broad-ribbed chest. He did not remove the pack he wore on his back.

The smuggler was big. Hard, flat, muscles shaped the fabric of his flexible plastic suit to fit their contour, and the

rugged features of his face wore an aspect of purpose. He had the appearance of a man used to this kind of a thing.

There was no panic in his actions as he pulled himself along on his belly through the tall grasses—just an indomitability that showed in every small motion. At the top edge of the hill's bank, he parted the brush to give himself a clear view of the surface below, laid a hand gun—equipped with silencer—at his side and waited.

A few minutes went by before he spotted the vanguard of his pursuers. His sharp eye caught the movements of his followers as it wound its way

around a tree trunk and across a small opening in the woods. The follower was about eight feet long, and twice as big around as his arm. Small metal legs ran down the length of its body on both sides and carried it through the underbrush faster than a man could walk. Just as he had suspected, the smuggler mused sourly; a mechanical "bloodhound." The humans would not be far behind.

Even as the smuggler made his observation, he swept up his gun and began firing. The first slug struck the "bloodhound" in the head and knocked it to one side—but slowed its progress not at all. The head was hidden in the brush after the first shot and the next few landed against its metal side and ricocheted off with a dull whine. By the time the man realized the futility of shooting at that body, the "bloodhound" was two-thirds of the way through the clearing. His next series of shots swept away, or mutilated, the small legs on the portion of its left side that remained in sight.

After that, the few glimpses the smuggler caught of the mechanism showed him that its pace had been slowed; but it came on relentlessly. He was hoping for at least one more clear shot when three men, clad in solid green outfits, and carrying guns, appeared below him.

For just an instant he weighed the pistol in his hand and observed them speculatively before he turned and crawled away.

Once clear of view from the bank edge he pulled himself to his feet and stood for a minute getting his bearings. He consulted the compass on his wrist and set off in a dogged jog-trot. His remaining energy was being burned prodigally, he knew—but it was lose them now, or lose his life. He stopped only once to rip two large oblong slabs of tough bark from a dead tree trunk.

When he came to a shallow, slow-flowing stream he walked in until the water came up mid-way to his calves.

It failed to penetrate his moisture-proofed boots or suit, and it was cool and not uncomfortable—but it slowed his progress more than he liked. His only hope now was that he had damaged the "bloodhound" enough to give him the time he needed.

He walked parallel with the stream bank until he had covered several hundred yards, and when he came out of the water his first step was taken on one of the slabs of bark which he laid carefully on the ground ahead of him.

He stepped from the first piece of bark to the second, then pivoted on one foot and picked up the initial slab. Putting it one stride length ahead of him he put his weight on it and reached back for the other. He continued the process until he was once again deep in the woods. His progress had been slow, but if his ruse worked he should have gained the time he needed.

TWO HOURS later the smuggler walked out of the forest onto a wide clear-glass highway and mingled with a slow-moving stream of traffic. Here, he knew, his spore would mingle with that of the hundreds of farmers coming from the city and returning. The "bloodhound" would never be able to single out his trail here.

He walked along the highway until the blue-glass wall of a mighty city loomed up before him.

At the gate he handed a sheaf of papers through one of the openings into a small out-shelter and waited while the guard inspected them.

There seemed to be some question about the papers. The guard went through them slowly, and a puzzled frown settled on his features. He shifted his glance and looked the smuggler up and down carefully. Finally he turned and called to someone inside.

The man who answered the call was dressed in the uniform of an officer. He was lean and hungry-looking, with a long neck and hollowed out cheeks.

He wore an habitual expression of melancholy distrust.

"This man's been out of the city for six months, sir," the guard said. "Do you want to talk with him before I let him through?"

The officer glanced searchingly at the smuggler before he picked up his papers and read them carefully. After a moment he looked up. "Will you go around the guardhouse and come in the door on the far side, please?" he asked. His words were courteous but his manner was not.

The smuggler shifted the pack on his back irritably, but did as he was told.

The officer met him at the door. "Come in," he said. He led the smuggler into a small inner office.

"Sit down," the officer said, shoving a chair forward. "Take off your pack and rest awhile." He seated himself behind a small desk.

The smuggler released a catch on his pack and it slid to the floor with a dull clinking sound. He stretched and rubbed his back with powerful long-fingered hands before he sat down.

"My name's Tewitt," the officer said, leaning back in his chair and putting his long legs on the desk. "What's yours?"

"Coval Pariseau," the smuggler answered.

"Where you been the last six months?"

"Out gathering ore samples for my company, Starwide Enterprises. Their headquarters are on Alexis III. You'll find all that information in my papers."

"Just answer my questions, please," Tewitt said with an affectation of boredom. He made a sucking noise with his tongue against his teeth. "Six months out in the woods alone is a pretty long time, ain't it?"

"Rex Major's a big world."

"Did you find what you were looking for?"

"I've got a rather good collection of samples," Pariseau answered. "I won't

know for certain how valuable they are, of course, until I've had them assayed. Would you care to see them?"

Tewitt waved his hand negligently. Abruptly he changed the trend of conversation. "You didn't see anything of a space ship that landed about daylight this morning, did you?" he asked.

"Sorry, I didn't," Pariseau answered. "If you know it came in, you should be able to locate it with a tracer."

"Oh we found the ship all right," Tewitt said easily. "But its owner got away. And the ship was loaded with arms he was smuggling in."

"What would he smuggle arms here for?" Pariseau asked.

Tewitt's lips drew back from his teeth in a mirthless smile. "Things have been happening while you were out in the brush," he said. "The Lottenbaies—the barbarians on our fringe—have been getting bolder. They've been stirring up our own natives against us, and buying arms from the smugglers who have been doing a big time business. I'd like to get my hands on one of those damn traitors; there's nothing lower than a human who'd sell arms to his own people's enemies. Sure you didn't see anything?"

"Not a thing," Pariseau answered.

"You could have had time, you know," Tewitt said speculatively, "to take a ship to one of the other worlds, pick up arms, and bring them here in the six months you been out. And wouldn't you say it looked rather suspicious, you showing up the same day the space ship landed?"

"I don't think so," Pariseau answered. "A smart operator would lay low out there a few days before coming in."

"Unless he figured that we would think just that. And played it smarter by coming right in."

"You seem to think I might be lying," Pariseau said. "Why don't you give me a lie-detector test and find out?"

"I'm going to do just that," Tewitt

answered; "pick up your bag and come with me."

THEY RODE into the city in a low-slung cat-track.

A short distance inside, they stopped in front of one of the towering blue-glass skyscrapers and went in. They took an elevator up to the one hundred and thirty-eighth floor and entered an office through a door inscribed: *Harold Hesse Official Encephalogist.*

An office girl said, "Good afternoon, Captain Tewitt," and passed them through.

"This man says his name's Coval Pariseau, Mr. Hesse," Tewitt said to the huge bear of a man slumped in his chair like a passive, inert mass of flesh. "This morning we spotted a space ship coming down a few miles out in the brush, and when our Benz 'copter got there they found it was a one-man smuggler's ship, full of weapons and ammunition.

"The smuggler had scuttled out, but our men took out after him with a bloodhound. They got pretty close one time, but the smuggler shot up the bound and got away. This fellow showed up a short time later; I think he might be our man."

"We can soon find out," Hesse's voice rumbled up from deep in his chest. "Sit down. Over there," he said to Pariseau, indicating a chair with his head but without moving the rest of his body. Only his eyes were alive, and quick.

While he obeyed Pariseau looked at Hesse closely. Hesse's large head was completely bald—so bare of hair that it was evident that none had ever grown there. Prominent ridges rimmed his temples, and his cheek bones were slightly wider than normal. Splashes of gold streaked the blue of his irises. They all added up to one thing: Hesse was not human.

"Before we begin," Hesse ignored Tewitt and spoke to Pariseau, "turn

around and take a look at that wall panel behind you."

Pariseau did as he was told.

"Those dials and gauges you see," Hesse said, "will measure your pulse rate and variations, changes in body temperatures, emotional fluctuations, and the electrical activity of your brain as we talk. I'll be reading them as we go along; the minute you tell a lie I'll know it; and you'll be in trouble. If you're innocent, tell the truth and you have nothing to fear. Now lean your head back."

Gingerly Pariseau let his head rest in the grooved support on the top of his chair. Small, automatic arms moved around and clasped his temples firmly. "What's your name?" Hesse asked.

"Coval Pariseau."

"What have you been doing for the past six months?"

"Gathering ore samples."

"Did you come in on that smugglers' ship this morning?"

"No."

Hesse turned to Tewitt. "I guess that's it," he said; "he's telling the truth."

The officer had settled himself comfortably in his chair and seemed surprised at the sudden termination of the test. He stirred uneasily, his sallow face showing its distrust and lack of conviction. "I thought sure he was our man," he said. "Then his face brightened. 'Do you mind if I ask him a few questions, Doc?' he asked.

"What for?" Hesse wanted to know. "Don't you think I know my job?"

"Oh, sure you do." Tewitt showed bad teeth in an ingratiating smile. "But I'm pretty good at accents, Doc. Now that I think of it, I'd like to listen to him talk some more; he might just possibly be a Lottenbaie in disguise. We know there's some around. If he is I can tell. And there is such a thing as his mind being worked on so that he can fool your gadgets, ain't there?"

Hesse shrugged. "It's possible," he said. "Go ahead."

Tewitt straightened up in his chair importantly and turned to Pariseau. "Start talking," he said. "About anything."

Pariseau raised his eyebrows and looked back at the man inquiringly.

"Give me a brief history of space colonization," Tewitt said impatiently.

"All right," Pariseau answered. "Over seven thousand years ago, the humans on the planet Earth discovered spacebridge—a method of almost instantaneous space flight. Since that time, they found one thousand, seven hundred and sixty-four planets in the galaxy suitable for human habitation—at least that's the last number I remember. Earth sent colonists to a few of those planets and, as Earth's population increased, and the colonies flourished and expanded, the human race moved on until it had colonized the majority of those worlds. Is that what you want me to tell you?"

"What world is this?" Tewitt asked.

"Rex Major, a planet on the outer rim of the human expansion."

When Tewitt paused Hesse asked, "Satisfied?"

"I don't know," Tewitt answered slowly. "He's got some kind of an accent, but I can't place it; the only thing I'm sure of is that he's not a Lottenbaie. But I suppose we'll have to let him go."

the year, he had paid a year's rent in advance so as to have a safe place to leave them.

The room was safe. Its plastic walls were impenetrable, for all practical purposes, and the door could be opened only when the intricate mechanism of its lock matched the lines on his palm with the pattern planted in it unicellular brain.

He paused a moment at the desk to order dinner before he took the elevator to the two hundred and thirty-first floor. Once inside he inspected his room briefly. Nothing had been touched.

For a time he stood looking at a mural on the wall depicting savage brown tribesmen engaged in fierce fighting. The caption read, *Slaggs in Battle*.

While he waited for his dinner, he stood in front of a full-length mirror on the door of his bathroom and stripped, slowly. He stepped closer to the mirror and carefully fingered his right eyebrow; the eyebrow came loose with a small, snapping sound and fell into the palm of his hand. He repeated the process with the left eyebrow. Next he loosened the edge of the suction base holding his curly black hair in place, and removed an ingenious wig. Finally he peeled back two thin strips of whiskered pseudo-skin from his face. Pariseau stood as bald and bare of hair as Hesse had been.

With a small suction-cup he removed the dark brown contact lenses from his eyes revealing a surface of candid blue, flecked with gold—also like Hesse. There was no doubt but that they both possessed the same racial characteristics—and the characteristics were not human.

The transformation completed, Pariseau stretched luxuriously and walked into the shower. Here he relaxed and the tension left his muscles. So far so good, he reflected. But his job had only just begun.

2



PARISEAU found his room in the hotel section of one of the square buildings still waiting. Most of his personal belongings were too bulky and valuable to be carried about with him; when he had been here earlier in

He finished drying himself before the click of the dumbwaiter told him that his dinner had arrived. Without dressing, he ate and soon afterward his eyelids drooped drowsily. He stretched out on one of the room's twin beds. The wall lights flickered out and the room automatically adjusted its heat to five degrees higher than his body temperature. Five minutes later he was asleep.

PARISEAU slept late. He ordered breakfast and showered again while he waited. After eating a leisurely meal he replaced his disguise of the day before, only leaving off the whisker-studded skin fabric.

He took an elevator crowded with office girls on their lunch hour down to the main floor of the massive building that housed the hotel. The building, with its shops, offices, and business establishments, constituted a small city in itself. During the day over fifty thousand people worked there.

In one of the inns he found a seat at the bar and ordered a glass of lager. A barman, with a washed and scrubbed face, filled his order briskly.

Pariseau paid for his drink with a purple slip of pliable plastic with the words, REX MAJOR, and a picture of a star in nova on one side, and a 50 printed in large, fancy-scroll numbers on the other.

The barman picked up the bill and turned it over in his hand. "The smallest you got?" he asked.

Pariseau nodded.

The barman hesitated, then shrugged and went to make change. He returned and placed several vari-colored slips of plastic beside the glass of lager.

"Is there a lounge-room on this floor?" Pariseau asked, pocketing the money.

The man nodded. "Straight back," he said, pointing over Pariseau's shoulder; "second lane to the right."

Pariseau finished his drink and

walked in the direction the barman had indicated. He found the room he sought and quietly joined a group of men seated in a semi-circular row of padded chairs—discussing the usual popular subject, politics. There was a small bar at the open end of the half-circle, and an unobtrusive barman went among the customers filling orders for drinks.

Pariseau noted that most of the loungers were human. And even those obviously of different species were very humanoid in body structure. Vaguely he recalled the prevalent theory that planets with physical conditions favorable to the support of human life had, quite naturally, evolved similar races. Two legs, two hands, large brains, and two eyes were all bodily features with inherent virtues of which evolution had almost universally taken advantage.

"Lager," Pariseau told the waiter as he came up.

A HUMAN with the round, red face of a baby was holding the floor. "The human race," he was saying, "is decadent. We haven't colonized a new world in over two hundred years: A direct result of our stagnant birth rate. We are at the turn of the cycle.

"History," he went on, "has been the same since the time of the first civilized cities of Earth. A young race, vigorous and vital, sweeps in, takes over a city or territory, and settles down. The subjugated people are relegated to subservient roles; perhaps even to slavery. To them fall all the menial occupations. The conquerors take the spoils of victory, and in time grow soft, unable to fight with their old vigor—and fall before the next wave of primitives. And that same thing is about to happen to our entire race any day now."

"But we never made slaves of the natives on the worlds we occupied," a man on his left—small, but firm of jaw—said. "Whenever possible, we maintain harmonious relations with them;

and even now, whenever they persist in remaining hostile, we only subdue them as much as is necessary for our own protection. Everyone knows that."

"Nevertheless, when we reach the stagnation period—as we have now—we are ripe for the invasion of the next, more vigorous race," the red-faced man insisted. "And the Lottenbaies, billions strong, are ready and eager to sweep in. It is our misfortune that Rex Major is the threshold world of that imminent invasion."

"But the Lottenbaies are barbarians," another man argued. "They could never conquer a race with such a highly developed technology as ours."

"That would be true if we had any unity between our worlds," the first man declaimed. "But we haven't; each of our worlds is content to go its own way, with only desultory trade and tourist traffic between each other. And now that the Lottenbaies are threatening Rex Major, what are the others doing about it? Nothing. We are left to stand or fall on our own strength."

"I don't think the Lottenbaies would dare attack us," the small man asserted.

"Then you're blind," the other asserted positively. "Do you think it's only a coincidence that our own natives, the Slaggs, have achieved unity among their warlike tribes now—for the first time since we settled here? And where do you think they're getting their weapons? The present situation is the result of deliberate Lottenbaie connivance. In our fight to hold off the Slaggs, the Lottenbaies expect us to drain our resources—perhaps even be overrun. Then they will step in and take over, and the long march back for the humans will have begun. I tell you we'd all be better off if there had been more Ox IIs in the galaxy."

The last sentence brought Pariseau up straight in his chair. "What about Ox II?" he asked. Instantly he was

sorry for having spoken; he was being rash in directing attention to himself.

"Ox II, sir," the florid man said, obviously pleased at the opportunity further to display his eruditeness, "is the one world that we humans wanted—and couldn't have. When we first colonized the planet we found the natives a pastoral, rather sedentary people. But a hundred years later they had adopted our machine methods and weapons, and we were ordered to leave."

"Naturally we refused—and found ourselves whipped to a standstill. One year after the ultimatum had been delivered, there wasn't a human being on the planet. For the next ten years we tried to beat our way back, but couldn't even gain a foothold. Finally we bypassed it, leaving Ox II a small island of isolation in the sea of human expansion." He stopped and looked at Pariseau for further questions, or comment.

Pariseau decided rapidly that a too-abrupt silence would look more suspicious than continuing the conversation—now that he was in it. "Yet there are *some* natives of Ox II on our worlds," he said.

"Assuredly. They are not a hostile people—as long as we respect their desire to be left alone. And they're a brilliant race. They make the finest surgeons, engineers, and highly skilled technicians in the galaxy. They are always welcome wherever they choose to settle. But if we had more races that fought us..."

Pariseau rose quietly as the man went on with his peroration and walked out of the lounge room.

AS HE CAME through the door into the traffic lane a tall blonde girl, clean limbed and graceful, came to meet him. Her hair was worn long over her shoulders and she walked with a smooth elastic stride from the loins

that had something of a feline grace about it.

Pariseau had time to observe that she had green eyes, a clear white skin, and a very red mouth, before she reached him and placed her hand on his arm. He felt the heat of the hand come through the fabric of his sleeve and warm him.

"I'm here, Coval," she said, and her voice was low and musical like the muted notes of a cello. The sound of it played through him as waves play over, and into, a sandy beach.

As far as Pariseau could recall, he had never seen her before. "Do I know you?" he asked.

She laughed, her teeth flashing white behind the red of her lips. "You're always jesting, Coval," she said. "Come; the others are waiting. We'll have to hurry." She turned and walked away—very sure of him following.

He did.

At the curb in front of the hotel she paused. "Call a cab, will you, Coval?" she asked.

By this time Pariseau had decided to play her game, even though he suspected where it led. He looked up the street for a cruising cab.

Something struck him a jolting blow on the back of his neck and drove him to his knees. He sprang to his feet and turned to face three men, all tall, big-boned—and blond, like the girl.

Before he could move again a sharp pain stabbed the muscle of his shoulder and he swiveled his body around in time to see the girl holding a long needle in her hand.

Pariseau drove his fist into her diaphragm and her mouth made a round O; as she fell he spun and struck the jaw of his nearest assailant. He sliced the heel of his hand into the throat of the second, but when he turned to the third he noted that his movements were slowing perceptibly.

They grew so sluggish that he was

not able to ward off the first blow of the man still standing and it landed low on his temple. He realized, with a sense of self-reprimand, that he had allowed the girl to drug him.

The blows continued to strike his face, as he stood, unable to move but stubbornly keeping his feet; it seemed a long time before the pounding drove him to the sidewalk.

PARISEAU regained consciousness in time to feel himself being pulled from a cab. Deliberately he allowed his body to remain limp as the men carrying him laid him flat on his back on the ground.

"He's a big brute," a man's voice said. "Must weigh over three hundred pounds."

For a time Pariseau listened to the voices around him until he identified the party as consisting of three men and a girl. The girl was the same tall blonde who had led him into the trap. Quite probably, he decided, the others were the men who had attacked him. The girl seemed to be in command.

Pariseau opened his eyes a mere slit and looked out. He was in an enclosed courtyard, he saw; on the roof of a tall building high overhead a huge illuminated bottle flashed the words of an advertisement for a health drink. He marked the location for future reference. Satisfied that he had observed all he needed he allowed a groan to escape his lips.

"He's coming out of it," a man's thickly accented voice warned.

"Good," the girl said; "we won't have to carry him."

A man grasped Pariseau by each arm and pulled him to his feet. He muttered and allowed them to drag him along. They walked through a small side entrance of the building that held the illuminated bottle and went down a long flight of ill-kept stairs.

There was no light over the stair-

way; by the time they reached the bottom they were in total darkness, but his captors seemed to know their way about very well. He heard the creak of another door opening and they walked through a long, black passageway.

By now the effect of the drug had worn off—except for a dull pounding at his temples.

Another door was opened and the party stepped into a small room lit by one dim overhead light.

"You'd better tie him up," the girl said. "He might try to make a break."

"What'll we tie him with, Zelda?" one of the blond men asked.

The girl pulled a scarf from around her neck and tossed it over. "Use that," she said.

"Where are you taking me?" Pariseau asked as they tied his hands behind his back.

"Shut up," the girl told him.

"I might cooperate better if I knew what you wanted," Pariseau said.

A fist landed against his cheek and rocked his head back.

He turned to look at the man who had struck him, studying his features, the down-slanting lines at the corners of his mouth and the jaundiced streaks of yellow in the white surrounding the green irises.

"We may meet again," Pariseau said levelly, "when my hands aren't tied. You'll remember this time then."

For answer the blond man struck him twice more in the face. Pariseau rode with the blows and they hurt him very little; but he felt a wild kind of anger rise up within him, and he twisted his hands behind him in an attempt to free them.

"Let him alone," the girl ordered; "there'll be time for that later."

They went into another passageway and this time the girl walked ahead, lighting the way with a hand flash. The others followed close behind Pariseau.

3



IT SEEMED to him that they walked for hours before the tunnel began to slant upward. A short time later, they emerged into the semi-light of a small, poorly ventilated shack. The shack smelled of dust and

locked-in heat.

They led Pariseau out into a clearing where a cat-track stood covered with brush and branches cut from the surrounding trees. He realized then that they were outside the walls of the city. Quickly he looked about for something with which to mark the spot for future reference. A tall fir, bare of limbs until it reached its shaggy peak, reared high above the clearing; it would serve very well as a landmark.

While two of the men uncovered the cat-track the third bound Pariseau's legs and arms with a rope he had taken from the shack and stuffed a gag into his mouth. They put him on the floor of the vehicle and threw a blanket over him.

The cat-track started up and they rode for several minutes before the hum of traffic told Pariseau that they had joined one of the main highways.

A half-hour later the sounds of traffic gradually faded and the going became slower. Several times rough places in the road rocked the vehicle and threw Pariseau against the back of the front seat. Once he struck his nose and he felt the warmth of a thin trickle of blood that ran out onto his lip.

He was hot and uncomfortable by the time they stopped.

When they removed the blanket that covered him and helped him to his feet he found that they were in another small clearing and with an almost iden-

tical shack at one end. But this one was painted green and had more of an appearance of permanence. One of the men cut the rope binding his feet.

Inside he found the shack quite well furnished, with comfortable, cushioned wire chairs that adjusted themselves to his captors' forms as they let their tired bodies drop into them.

Pariseau moved toward a vacant chair. The girl at his side reached over and buried her fingers in his hair. She bent his head back until her face was close to his. "You're not going to get any rest yet, friend," she said, her green eyes half-closed. She turned to one of the men. "Tie him against the wall, Manie," she said.

"All right, Zelda," the man answered, getting to his feet reluctantly. He walked over and pushed Pariseau to the far side of the room. For the first time then Pariseau noted that a metal ring was set into the wall, at about the height of the middle of his back.

He did not struggle as they tied him.

For a few minutes the girl paced the room. She seemed to be driving herself to a cold fury as she strode from one close-in wall to the other. At each few steps she slapped a short riding whip against her thigh.

She stopped finally, directly in front of Pariseau.

"You struck me back there," she gritted. "No one can do that to me." Her face twisted into a grimace of effort and she brought the riding whip down and across his face.

The blow was unexpected and it snapped Pariseau up straight. An incredulous, startled expression flickered across his features. Now, he knew, was a time to remain calm, but he felt his control slip almost as audibly as though a gear had been thrown out of place. His lips pulled back from his square white teeth as he opened his mouth to speak.

She brought the whip down across his face a second time.

With the landing of the blow the time passed when he could control his actions with reason.

His eyes lit up with a hot, violent, wildness, and the force of his temper blinded him with a red film of fury that seemed to pound the blood against the back of his eyeballs.

"*Stop that!*" he bellowed hoarsely. Then his voice leveled. "One more time and I'll break every bone in your damn body."

At his first words the girl had fallen back a step, appalled at the depth of the rage he threw at her. She recovered her poise instantly. "Pig!"

She lashed him across the face a third time.

ALL RESTRAINT left Pariseau then. He was not aware that the loose-limbed blond men had risen and run over to join the girl as he strained against the throngs that bound his wrists to the wall. At the third blow of the whip the great muscles along his thighs and upper arms swelled and writhed like live things beneath the flexi-cloth covering them.

He was only dimly aware of the blows landing against his body as he struggled. A volcanic, brute part of his mind had taken over now, and, almost like a thing apart, it directed his actions as he struggled. It understood quickly the futility of trying to break his bonds and it let his body sag forward until his arms were above his head.

The tendons in his shoulder sockets were shaped and formed differently than those of a human and his arms came out of their sockets, as they turned upward, and went back into place as the arms reached their height. He swiveled his body once, twice, three times, using his weight and leverage to twist the thongs that held him. The third time around, the thongs parted and he was free.

His white face tightened into a grin of intemperate joy and a laugh bel-

lowed up from his chest. "Now!" he roared.

He took a stride forward and swung a fist the size of a child's head at the first big-boned blond in his path. The man ducked and the blow landed high on his cheek bone and sent him spinning across the room. He crashed into one of the wire chairs and carried it to the floor with him as he went down.

Swiftly Pariseau reached out and grabbed another of his tormentors by the front of his tight cover-all suit. Still laughing he locked his other hand in the soft flesh of the man's groin and lifted him off the floor. He raised the threshing body as high as he could reach before he slammed it to the floor.

Dimly he heard the girl scream.

A bullet landed against the wall over his shoulder, as Pariseau's catapulting body caught the third man in the stomach and carried him up and across the room. The wall stopped the rush and the man's body went limp as the wind exploded from his lungs.

There was little semblance of reason in Pariseau's gaze—made almost myopic by the tempest that rode him—as he stood with wide-spread legs glaring about him. He looked then like a great beast back from the era when the worlds were young, and only the mighty lived to fight a second time.

He heard a stifled gasp and looked up to see the girl, Zelda, leaning back against a low chest of drawers. In her eyes was a wild light of terror. One hand was bunched into a fist and pressed against her open mouth. The other held a short knife.

She was next, Pariseau's sluggishly functioning mind told him. He began walking slowly toward her, his legs spread wide as he came forward like a low-built tank.

A small glimmer of reason returned to Pariseau as the girl straightened to meet him. He felt a flicker of admiration at the way she fought down her terror in that instant. She knew she was going to die, and she was afraid,

but she did not beg; her strength was as nothing against his, yet she was going to fight.

When he was one stride away she stabbed swiftly with the knife in her hand. Pariseau's mind was trapped in its singleness of purpose and he was barely aware of the movement—not enough to attempt to parry the thrust—but his diaphragm tightened instinctively and the knife ripped through skin and fatty tissue but did not penetrate farther.

His hand closed around her wrist and he shook the knife loose like he'd shake a toy from a child's grip. He raised his right hand and, carefully, meticulously, set the fingers around her throat. Slowly he brought pressure to bear until the fingertips dug deep into the clear white skin. Beneath his hand he could feel a pulse pounding wildly.

The thing that stopped him then was the utter lack of fear in her eyes as they met his. She was unable to speak or breathe, and the hand about her throat was choking the life from her body, but she made no attempt even to struggle.

Suddenly Pariseau realized that he could not kill her.

With a feeling of shocked surprise, he understood also that he did not hate her. Somehow, he recognized in her the same spirit of high emotion, and mercurial temper that were a part of him. Theirs were natures of a kindred kind.

Abruptly he leaned forward and placed his mouth over hers. He held it there for a moment and gradually he felt her body arch forward and strain against him. He wondered briefly whether it was response or resistance that activated that straining.

When he drew away, a streak of his blood stained her white cheek. He turned and walked out of the shack.

For a long moment after he had gone, Zelda stood unmoving. Then she brought her hand slowly up to her cheek and wiped off the blood. Bring-

ing the hand down again she stared at it long and thoughtfully.

PARISEAU picked out a high hill, in the direction he judged the city to be, and set off toward it. He made no effort to seek or follow a trail.

If he could reach the hill he felt he would be safe. Even if the girl had confederates that she could summon, it would take time. They would never be able to find him in this woods once he'd put a few miles between him and them, he reasoned. There was always the possibility that they would bring a "bloodhound" to track him but that was a chance he had to take.

Pariseau had taken quite a beating back in the shack and now he was feeling its effects. His muscles were beginning to stiffen and the gash in his stomach still bled. The blood was unable to soak through the moisture-proof material of his suit and it gathered in his crotch, chafing him, and ran down his leg. He had to find some place soon where he could rest.

A short distance before he reached the hill he came to a river. He heard the sound of it for fifteen feet of trudging and at last when he stood on its bank he could see that the sound came from a small waterfall. The river was swift and the water went over the fall and hit the lower ledge with a battering roar. He felt the vibration of it come up from the ground, through his legs, and into his body.

Pariseau lay on his stomach and drank long and thirstily. He washed the grime and dirt from his face and cuts and felt better—but weary. His feet dragged heavily as he rose and walked down the bank beside the falls and into the water's edge at the bottom.

He stayed in the water until he reached the foot of the hill. Here he found a long shallow cave opening into the rocks facing the river and crawled in. Some animal had left its offal, but it was dry and hard and he had no

trouble cleaning it out. He forced his tired body to drag in dry leaves and fern branches to make a bed before he dropped exhausted.

He had no idea how long he slept, but when he awoke it was dark. Crawling outside he stood for a long time listening. Only the sounds of small animals and other night noises came to him. He drank at the river and crawled back into the cave.

During the night he slept only fitfully; his face ached dully and whenever he turned in his sleep he felt the pain in his stomach.

And he dreamed. Dreamed of the girl, Zelda, but in his dreams her skin was colored green, and her long blonde hair was green—the same live green as her eyes.

This time when he awoke daylight had returned and a cold steady rain splashed at the mouth of the cave. His stomach still pained him, but when he examined the cut he found that a hard crust had formed over its edges; there was no sign of infection.

He went out once to drink at the river, then returned and covered himself with branches and tried to sleep again.

The rain persisted all through the day, and sometime during the afternoon he killed a small, red-furred animal that crawled in seeking shelter from the rain and cooked it over a fire he made at the cave entrance. The meat was tough and stringy but it satisfied his hunger for the time being.

There had been no sign of pursuers. If they were coming, he decided, they would have been here before this. In the evening he slept again.

During the night he developed a slight fever and twice he crawled out to drink at the stream. After the second time he was unable to fall back to sleep and he sat with his back to the cave wall and went over his possible future actions.

He was feeling better now. All his life he had felt that living was good,

with its freedom and action, and even its bitterest moments were great. There was no part of it that he ever regretted.

The rain stopped while he waited patiently for daylight.

When morning came he set out on a diagonal course to that he had taken when he left the shack and after an hour's walk he came to broad fields of cultivated crops. He followed a narrow dirt road until it joined one of the broad glass highways leading to the city. He followed it in.

At the gate the first person he met was Tewitt. Tewitt greeted him with his halitotic smile. "Welcome back," he said.

TEWITT said, "Let's have that story again," with an assumption of reasonable inquiry.

"I've repeated it four times now," Pariseau said wearily. He was stiff and sore, and there was no strength left in him to be angry with this invidious man.

"Then let me hear it the fifth time," Tewitt said. His eyes showed gray and damp in their deep pouches; he was that type of official who exerted his authority to the full, savoring each moment of discomfort he could bring to those forced to deal with him.

Pariseau drew a deep breath. "I was kidnapped," he said. "There isn't anything more to tell."

"How did you say they got you out of the city?"

"I don't know. They knocked me out and when I came to I was out in the woods." That part, of course, was a lie, but he had no intention of revealing anything about the passageway under the city's wall. That information fitted in with his future plans.

"How did you get beaten up so bad?" Tewitt asked.

"I fought," Pariseau said listlessly.

"I'll bet they had their hands full," Tewitt observed with sharp interest, his cloak of officiousness slipping from him momentarily. "You're a powerful

looking bruiser; I imagine you'd be a tough customer in a rough and tumble. Did you give them as good as you got?"

Pariseau shrugged. "I suppose so," he said.

"How many were there?"

"Three."

"What happened to your papers?"

"They were gone when I looked for them after I got away."

The questioning had been going on for hours now, and there was no sign that Tewitt was tiring of asking them. Pariseau's head drooped wearily onto his chest and his eyes closed leadenly. Tewitt watched him for a few minutes and saw that Pariseau was sleeping. He went out.

Pariseau's eyes opened at the sound of voices behind him, and he recognized the tones of Tewitt and Hesse.

"But there's something about his story that smells," he heard Tewitt's nasal tang.

"Have you found out what it is?" Hesse asked.

"No. He sticks to the same story and won't give any details. But I'd like the chance to sweat it out of him."

"You wouldn't do anything illegal, would you?" Hesse asked.

"Well..."

"You won't as long as I know about it," Hesse said. "I'd suggest that you turn him loose immediately."

"Legally I can keep him for a day, twenty-eight hours," Tewitt answered surlily.

"I'll assume responsibility for him for the rest of that twenty-eight hours," Hesse said. "If you insist, I'll sign a paper to that effect."

"What're you so interested in this guy for?"

Pariseau noted the long pause before Hesse answered. "Are you under the impression that I have to account to you for my conduct?" he asked. Tewitt must have realized that he had gone too far, for there was a sulky silence.

Pariseau felt Hesse's heavy hand on

his shoulder and allowed himself to appear to come awake. "You're coming with me," Hesse said.

4



OMEHOW, Hesse appeared out of his element when he was on his feet. His huge hulking body seemed built for sitting—or crouching. He must have weighed near to four hundred pounds—perhaps fifty pounds more than

Pariseau. But then there was little excess fat on Pariseau's framework, while Hesse was so obese as to appear almost boneless.

Once inside the city they went up one level and rode a lower pedestrian belt. "You look as if you had trouble," Hesse said.

"Three men and a girl picked me up," Pariseau answered. "They took me out of the city through a tunnel under the wall."

"Did you find out anything?"

Pariseau shook his head. "They started roughing me up before they asked any questions," he said; "I lost my temper."

Hesse tossed his bald head back irritably. "You've got to learn to control that damned temper of yours," he said impatiently. "Getting yourself beaten up, when it serves no useful purpose, is folly. And you might have lost the best contact we've been able to make."

"I think I know how to find them again."

"I hope so," Hesse answered. "Do you think you'll need any help?"

"I'll handle it."

"I guess you can—if anybody can," Hesse agreed. He seemed to be trying to find words he wanted to say. "I'm sorry if I sounded angry," he said after a minute. "But this is a dangerous

game, and I don't like you getting hurt. I know it takes someone like yourself—a man born to contention—to stand up to the dirt and toughness you meet, and that that temper of yours is only the evidence of the something in you that makes you the most fit for this violent kind of work. But I worry."

He stopped and rested his hand on Pariseau's arm. "I'm really proud of you, lad," Hesse smiled, and the smile softened the ingrained harshness of his features. He gave Pariseau a shove. "Get along now," he said, "and keep out of trouble—at least don't let them hurt you too much."

PARISEAU changed the texture of his hair and eyebrow clips from black to a light brown.

He rode the pedestrian belts in the vicinity of his hotel until he found the building he sought—the tall blue-glass edifice with the illuminated bottle on its peak.

Keeping in the background of the riders on the belts he spent most of the following days within sight of the small courtyard at the rear of the building.

On the sixth day he saw her. Zelda.

He followed her at a distance and she led him to his own hotel. When she stepped into an elevator he was near enough to note that no other passengers rode up with her. He watched the arrow of the floor indicator until it stopped on eighty-one.

Five minutes later a ten-cent plastic note had been passed to the clerk at the desk, and Pariseau had the information he wanted. He spent most of the remainder of the day seated in a chair at the far end of the hotel lobby. From where he sat he had an unobstructed view of the hotel's bank of elevators.

Shortly after sundown, Zelda emerged from one of the elevators and walked leisurely out the front door. With his eyes Pariseau followed her

progress down the street until she disappeared in the crowd.

He rose casually then and walked to an elevator. Entering he rode up to the eighty-first floor. He went quickly down the long thickly-carpeted hallway, turned right at the first transversing corridor, and found the door he sought—*R 34 1*.

For a short minute he stood listening intently for any sounds of approaching guests then bent forward and carefully inserted a small piece of plastic, with one gummed side, into the thin slit of the door next to the hand imprint. Satisfied, he returned to the elevator.

Pariseau's wait this time was short. He had hardly seated himself in the lobby before Zelda re-entered the hotel and went upstairs. She was still alone.

He gave her a half-hour before following.

In front of door number *R 34 1* once again, he examined it briefly. His strip of plastic had done its work; a close observer would have noted that the door had stopped a bare fraction of an inch before closing.

There was no handle on the door but Pariseau set his fingernails into the edge of the palm-lock opening and pulled. The door opened silently.

Just as silently Pariseau entered. A small, gripless gun nestled in the palm of his right hand. The only part exposed was the tip of the barrel which peeked out between his middle fingers.

Inside, the sight that met Pariseau's gaze caused the breath to catch in his throat. In the center of the room a series of amber lights, set in an oblong frame, blazed downward. Beneath the lights rested a plasti-foam couch; and on the couch lay Zelda.

A thin film of transparent oily substance covered her body and gave off small bright patches of light reflection.

Pariseau spent a split-second in awed admiration before she became aware of his presence and turned swift-

ly toward him, throwing one long smooth leg over the edge of the couch.

"You!" she gasped. "What are you..."

Pariseau centered the small gun in his palm between her eyes and squeezed. Zelda stiffened and froze in position. Her lips stayed parted, and the startled expression was still on her face.

There had been no sound from the gun, and Zelda was unmarked. It was a special weapon, the principle of its functioning known only to Pariseau's own people; no other world was even aware of its existence.

He walked quickly over to where Zelda lay, glancing at the watch on his wrist as he went. He had set the gun to hold her immobile for exactly three minutes. At the end of that time she would regain consciousness—with no awareness of the passage of time in between; nor she would not realize that anything had been done to her. A few hours later, she would have a slight headache, but there would be no way for her to know its cause.

Bending over her frozen form Pariseau ran one finger lightly along her thigh. He studied the liquid clinging to the finger-tip and found it light and odorless. He glanced briefly at the lights overhead and formed his conclusion: the lights and oil were the standard tools of a skin-bleach process.

He took a small magnifying glass from a back pocket and focused it on the small wrinkles at the corners of her eyes. Not certain of what it showed, he spread the wrinkles between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand and examined the smoothed-out skin closely. A faint greenish tinge showed through the white.

He turned the glass on her hair and deep down, where the roots hugged the scalp, he found again a faint greenish coloring.

He straightened up, satisfied.

As he had suspected the girl was a

Lottenbaie, one of the race of barbarians that edged the area of human habitation—and waited only the proper opportunity before sweeping in for an attack.

A GLANCE at his wrist watch told him that his three minutes were very nearly up. He pocketed the glass in his hand, went quickly back to the room's entrance and took up the position he had been in when he froze the girl.

A few seconds later she said, "...doing here?"

"Aren't you glad to see me?" Pariseau asked.

"How did you get in?"

"We all have our secrets, don't we?" he answered lightly.

Suddenly she seemed to become aware of her state of undress. There was no embarrassment or confusion in her manner as she rose unhurriedly and walked across the room to where a wrap-around robe lay on the arm of a chair.

Pariseau had to admire the poise with which she handled the situation—difficult under any circumstances. The hatred of her manner seemed to put him in the position of an ogling yokel, while she acted oblivious to his existence.

She wrapped the robe around her and turned back to him. "If this is a social call," she said, "your manner of entrance is...unconventional, to say the least."

"Please forgive me," Pariseau said, readily adopting her manner of casual conversational interplay. "Our last parting was a bit...ah, unconventional also. I was uncertain as to how welcome I would be."

"What do you want here?"

"I merely wished to renew our interrupted acquaintance," Pariseau answered. "Surely a woman as charming as yourself should not find that too surprising."

She smiled slowly, the last trace of

resentment and uncertainty gone from her manner. "You are a very interesting person yourself," she said. "I've been thinking of you quite a bit since our last meeting also—as you may have suspected."

"May I ask what aroused your interest in me in the first place?" Pariseau asked.

"At the time my friends and I had in mind only the purchase of certain goods which we understood you had for sale."

"Your method of attempting the purchase was a bit drastic, wasn't it?"

"You struck me," she said, her eyes showing for a moment the turbulent spirit beneath her composed exterior. "Don't ever do that again." She paused speculatively. "On the other hand," she said slowly, and her voice had dropped down a half octave. "You might be the one man that I'd permit to do that—and not kill him for it."

"Thank you," Pariseau said. He had meant to say it jestingly and was surprised at the way his words sounded to him. In that instant he realized that this woman had the power to sway and change him, to turn him reasonable when he was unreasonable, to make him gentle when he was angry. Perhaps also she had the power to drive him mad when he was sane.

"At least when I look at you now I do not think of—killing you," Zelda said.

They looked at each other for a long moment.

She laughed then at the way she had shattered his poise and she was once again a woman very sure of herself. "Drink?" she asked, rising to her feet.

He nodded.

She went to a small bar in the corner and began putting together two drinks. Pariseau liked the way she hadn't asked what he wanted. It was a small thing, but it showed the spirit of a woman with a mind that had not conformed too readily to the niceties and polite courtesies of society. And

...he laughed silently to himself as he admitted it...she had stirred something in him which few other women had ever been able to touch. He rubbed the moist palms of his hands down along the sides of his trouser legs.

She turned with the drinks in her hands. "Oh," she said, surprised to find him still standing, "I'm sorry; please sit down."

"Thank you." He started toward a chair.

"Over here," she said.

He took the seat on the wall-rest beside her, which she had indicated. She handed him his drink and, whether by accident or not, her fingers brushed his. He was aware, as he had been the first time she touched him, of the unexpected warmth of her fingers—while they appeared so slender and cool twined about the liquor glass.

He took the drink and she said, "I owe you something." She leaned forward and put her lips against his. She increased the pressure slightly before she drew away.

Pariseau grasped for some inconsequential remark, but she held her face close to his and he could find no words. Her breath had the faint aroma of mint, and he could see his own reflection in the azure depths of her green eyes.

Unseeing she put her drink on the stand beside the wall-rest and moved nearer to him. She tilted up her chin and took the lobe of his ear between her white teeth and bit until he felt a sharp pain.

The liquor in his glass splashed over the sides and into his lap.

BACK IN his room, Pariseau put through a call on his private screen-phone, pressed the scrambler button, and waited.

Hesse must have been sitting near his instrument for his large head took up two-thirds of the screen. "Yes?" he said.

"I've reestablished contact," Pariseau told him.

"Through the girl?"

"Yes."

"I figured that would be the best means," Hesse said. "How did it go?"

"Quite well; I think she was as glad to see me as I was to see her."

"How did you get that impression?"

"Well..." Pariseau paused, ill at ease.

"She turned on the charm?" Hesse asked. He laughed. "What is there about that big ugly face of yours that women love? It's a mystery to me, but it always seems to happen."

Pariseau felt himself getting red again. "That had nothing to do with it," he said uncomfortably. He wondered why it was that he always felt like a small boy whenever he talked with his superior. Especially when Hesse teased him-like this. "She probably played it that way hoping to manipulate me a little easier," he said.

"Did you check to make certain that she is a Lottenbaie?" Hesse asked, all trace of bantering gone from his tone now.

"Yes; she is, all right."

"Did you talk business?"

"No. I thought I'd better see what you had in mind first."

"I think," Hesse said, "that it will be safe now for you to sell our hidden cache of guns and ammunition. Let me know when they'll be picking it up, and I'll set the situation here so that the officials learn about the cache at very nearly the same time. Maybe we can give the government another jolt if they catch the Lottenbaies in the act of picking up the arms."

"I'll let you know as soon as I've done it," Pariseau agreed. "Has there been any action on your end yet?"

"Quite a little. The president of Rex Major has sent our envoys to the eight nearest worlds in this sector. If we can time our little jolt with the cache right we should really get them moving."

"I'll call again as soon as I know anything," Pariseau said.

"Good luck."

5



THE EYES of most of the patrons of the bar followed Zelda's progress as she made her way through the crowded room. The ankle-length, skin tight trousers she wore followed the conventional pattern of Rex Major style.

Her bare midriff and elastic-top halter, pulled down off her smoothly rounded shoulders, was little more or less revealing than the dress of most of the other women; but the pastel blue of her outfit, emphasizing the whiteness of her woman's flesh, and the white trim of the halter, patterned in such a way as to draw discreet attention to the round pressure of her breasts against her frock was an eye-catching vision that few of the other women could ever hope to match. She wore the clothes as though she had grown them.

Pariseau watched her approach with a personal appreciation of her beauty.

She met his glance and read there the things that made her feel desirable. She seated herself across from him in the semi-private booth off the dance floor and gave him several long minutes to absorb her into his thoughts before she spoke. The look she gave him over her highball glass was almost a caress, but when she spoke the words were not the unspoken ones that had been in her eyes.

"Coval," she said resolutely, "there's something I have to talk to you about."

"Yes?"

"As you probably realize by now," she said, "I work for a group of people—their identity will have to remain my secret—who wish to buy something

that I'm quite certain you have for sale."

"And what is that?" Pariseau asked.

"Before I answer that question," she said, "let me say that we have quite authentic information that you are the man who brought in a space ship load of arms last week."

"And?"

"And while the police seized that load, we believe you have other arms secreted somewhere here on Rex Major. Are we correct in presuming that they are for sale?"

"You'd like to buy them?"

"Yes."

"I'm not going to hedge, and pretend that I don't know what you're talking about," Pariseau said. "I might say that I know enough about you to believe that you're not trying to trap me, and that your offer probably is legitimate. So we can get right down to business. What will you pay?"

"That would depend on the amount and condition of the arms, of course," she answered.

"My terms are ten thousand counts, sight unseen," Pariseau said.

She hesitated. "I don't know if I have the authority to agree to that."

"I'm afraid you'll have to take it or leave it."

"How would you deliver?"

"When I receive the money I'll give you a map of the area, marked to show the location of the arms, and give you directions so that you'll have no trouble finding them."

"And we'd have to trust you," she said thoughtfully before giving him his answer. "I'll have to get the authority before I can agree," she said. "But I could call right now, and let you know in a few minutes. Is that agreeable with you?"

"Perfectly."

"Then excuse me, please." She rose and walked to a row of screen-phone booths across the room.

AFTER SHE disappeared Pariseau rose quickly and followed, taking a booth a few paces from where she had entered.

Hesse rubbed the sleep from his eyes as he answered. "Oh," he said, when he recognized Pariseau. "You. What is it?"

"I have only a short time to talk," Pariseau said, speaking rapidly. "I'm on the point of making the transaction now. They'll probably move fast once I give them the location, so you'd better get things moving on your end at the earliest opportunity."

"I'll do it the first thing in the morning," Hesse replied tersely. "I've decided on one change however. I'm not going to give the authorities the exact hiding place; that way they'll have to send out searching parties. The Lottenbaies should reach there first, and probably be intercepted in the act of removing the arms. That should be more effective than their merely finding the cache."

"Whatever you say," Pariseau answered. "Is that all?"

Hesse nodded and broke the connection.

He left the booth, took two steps, and a low voice said, "Don't turn around; I have a gun aimed at your back. Walk directly to the front door, and outside."

Pariseau hesitated only a split-second before obeying. In that short interval he decided to make no attempt to thwart his unseen abductor. This way should accomplish his end as well or better than any other. He walked slowly to the front door.

"You may look back now, if you wish," the voice behind him said, once they were outside.

Pariseau turned. It needed only a glance to tell him that he was dealing with no ordinary adversary. The man was tall, big-boned, and blond—as he had expected—but there was a strength of character and an inner conviction of power that his earlier captors had

lacked. Pariseau marked him down as a dangerous opponent.

"What's your business with me, Mr.—?" Pariseau hesitated expectantly.

"You may call me Kolls," the man said; "our business can wait until later. For now, step up on the pedestrian belt—and keep in mind that the hand I have in my pocket holds a loaded gun. Also, I'm a very good shot."

"I'll remember," Pariseau said.

They rode the belt until they came to the building with the illuminated bottle on its top.

In the courtyard Zelda was waiting for them. She wore a cape over her outfit. She seemed to be trying to tell Pariseau something with her eyes, but he ignored her.

THEY WENT through the underground passageway and came out in the clearing at the end. This time there was a small Benz flyer waiting for them with a pilot at the controls. Pariseau speculated briefly as to whether these men had some method of communication between those within the city and those without. They entered and the copter rose into the air.

Kolls made no attempt to blindfold Pariseau and he observed the terrain as they passed, making a picture of it in his mind for possible future use.

At the end of almost three hours' flight, most of it above untraveled jungle, they passed over a mighty encampment of brush huts, animal-hide tents, and other primitive dwellings, most of them obviously temporary. The dwellings stretched as far as the eye could see, and among them moved countless numbers of shaggy tribesmen.

A gigantic bivouac of Slaggs.

His captor must either be very sure of him, if he were allowing him to see this, Pariseau decided, or else Kolls had no intention of ever allowing him to return. He felt the surge of excite-

ment in his bowels that the presence of danger always brought. And, as always, the excitement pleased him. He wondered idly about this thing within him that demanded conflict, and adventure. Life without that, to him, would always be an empty thing, robbed of its vital juice.

It was a heritage of his blood, he decided. He remembered hearing how his superior had been the same when young, and who even now—when he had grown too old for physical conflict—must live on its fringes. He shrugged philosophically.

Somewhere on the edge of the Slagg territory the copter landed. Here the encampment was somewhat different; most of the dwellings he saw were made of a green sheet-plastic, shaded to blend with the surrounding jungle—and nothing about it was haphazard.

The buildings were laid in neat, orderly rows, the space between was conspicuously clean, and the men within sight worked or walked briskly and erect, each seemingly engaged with important tasks.

On one edge of the encampment ran a swift, deep river.

PARISEAU spent the few remaining hours of daylight and all the night alone. Zelda disappeared soon after they landed; she had not spoken to him at all. Kolls lingered only long enough to inform him that he was free to do what he wished, as long as he did not leave the area of the Lottenbaie encampment, but warned him against displaying excessive curiosity.

Pariseau stayed in the vicinity of the hut assigned him but kept all his faculties of observation alert. He noted very soon that the Lottenbaies were divided into two quite distinct types—perhaps even separate species. The minority—about a dozen of whom were bleached white—bore the general characteristics of Kolls and Zelda. The differences between them and the majority of the green men were small, but

quite pronounced. The others had coarser nose and ear cartilage—the latter without lobes and shaped like conical sea shells—and small pig eyes. Also their coloring was a deeper shade of green. But their principal difference was one of intelligence. Kolls' branch of the race obviously was the more intellectual, and dominated the others.

The outstanding characteristics of the green men were their orderly, systematic regimentation, and sharp discipline.

KOLLS WAKED Pariseau before dawn the next morning. "We'll be leaving in exactly fifteen minutes," he said. "Be ready."

"You seem quite sure of my compliance," Pariseau commented, not rising from his cot.

Kolls stood over him, looking down. "You have no choice," he said.

Pariseau reflected on this for a moment. "That's true," he answered. "But tell me this. Are you buying those weapons from me, or simply appropriating them? And what do you intend to do with me, after I've led you to where I have them hidden?"

"That depends entirely on you," Kolls replied. He spoke the universal English of the humans faultlessly. "If your conduct between now and the completion of the transfer convince me that you are acting in good faith you will be paid the price you ask, and allowed to go—with the assurance that we will pay the same price for any further shipments you care to make. If I am not satisfied as to your trustworthiness..." He made a significant motion with one hand.

Pariseau pulled himself slowly from his cots and Kolls left him.

THE LOTTENBAIE pilots set the pair of flying barges down in the clearing Pariseau pointed out to them. Immediately upon landing, a segment of the green men spread out and took up positions of observation in a circle

several hundred yards from the ships.

Pariseau led Kolls and the main party to a mound of rocks piled haphazardly at the base of a low cliff. He showed them which rocks to remove. A short time later they had cleared an opening into the cliff face.

Less than a half-hour elapsed before all the cases had been removed and placed in the ships.

At that moment the warning came.

There was a sharp cry from one of the sentries posted on a hilltop, and a minute later a small Benz came swooping over the ridge. It passed over them, then banked sharply and returned. It hovered over the party and their pair of barges, removing the last doubt about it having spotted them.

Immediately those of the Lottenbaies that were armed opened fire. The Benz wavered, lost a few yards altitude in a sudden drop, bucked erratically forward three times before it set into a long wabbling glide that carried it behind a tree-covered ridge.

Kolls shouted something in his own language and the sentries came hurrying in. He turned and barked out a string of commands at several of the green men and they moved in a body toward Pariseau.

He knew it was futile to resist, and he did not intend to; but he found himself striking down the first green man that put a hand on him. The others crowded in from all sides and began striking at him. It was obvious that they intended to take him alive. The man on the ground grabbed his legs and Pariseau fell on his side. He kicked loose and fought his way to his feet once more. For a time the close press of bodies against him gave him some protection and he struck down each face that appeared before him.

The weight of their numbers bore him down a second time. They drew back then and formed a tight circle around him. They began kicking, and did it as systematically as they did everything else. The first blow struck

between his eyes and stunned him. A second boot, with the weight of a green body behind it landed on his chest and he had trouble breathing. He never knew where the boot hit that blanked him out.

ALL AFTERNOON Pariseau paced the floor of his hut. He had examined it almost inch by inch since the Lottenbaies had returned and placed him there. The hut, he found, was made of sheet-plastic—obviously of Rex Major manufacture—and each sheet had been heat-welded together in its patented manner. There was no possibility of penetrating it with any of the implements he had on hand.

The one window was made of a clear plastic, also welded into place, and equally as impenetrable as the rest of the building. The air vents were in the ceiling and their openings were not large enough for a man's body to squeeze through. The door was the type that locked into its frame and became part of the wall as long as it was closed; the lock mechanism was not set to his hand print. They had him very securely imprisoned.

Toward evening they brought him a meal of the meat of the sheep-like animal and some leafy vegetable. No one appeared after that and, as the day's activity quieted outside, Pariseau lay down on his cot and slept. He intended to be as prepared as possible for whatever might come the next day.

6



SOMETIME during the following forenoon the sound of many men moving about the front of his hut drew Pariseau to the window. There he saw nearly a hundred of the green men. Each carried a weapon of

some kind—mostly sawed-off tree-limb clubs, or metal machine parts. It was obvious they were being carried for a purpose, and the purpose boded no good for him.

For a moment the iron discipline of the green men had been relaxed. They shouted and laughed and seemed in a festive mood.

The sound of his door opening turned Pariseau around. Zelda walked in followed closely by Kolls.

Zelda spoke first. "At my request Leader-Kolls has agreed to speak with you," she said formally.

Without comment, Pariseau lifted his glance to Kolls.

"Underleader Zelda seems to feel that there is some doubt about your having betrayed us," he said, speaking as a man who has already formed his conclusions and was only allowing them to be corroborated. "In my own mind, I am certain that you attempted to lead us into a trap. However, I will listen to what you have to say."

Pariseau thought quickly. The possibility was small, but his ability to convince Kolls of his innocence was probably his only chance of emerging from this predicament with his life.

"I brought you to the arms, as I promised. The appearance of the Benz was at that time was an unfortunate coincidence."

"A rather improbable coincidence, I would say," Kolls replied coldly.

"If I had betrayed you to the Rex Major authorities, why wouldn't they have been waiting for you in force?" Pariseau asked. "And why would they let you get the arms?"

"Very easily explained," Kolls said. "But let me give you the complete picture of the betrayal as I see it. You have no direct association with the Rex Major authorities, and your foremost concern is your own gain. Yet your peculiar form of conscience prompted you to attempt to prevent us from ever getting the arms, even while you made money on them. Your original plan

very probably was to inform on us after we had paid you; my forcing you to accompany us rather disrupted that doublecross, as far as you were concerned.

"However, we know that you made a call just before I picked you up. I would surmise that you gave the authorities only a hint as to the location of the arms—just in case your deal with us was held up. The Benz was on a scouting expedition, covering the territory you had hinted at when it spotted us; unfortunately for you, you were in our hands at the time. Now, if there is any flaw in that reasoning, please point it out."

There wasn't much he could say, Pariseau decided quickly. "I'm under the handicap that I can give you only my word for any arguments I might make against it," he said.

"That is true," Kolls agreed. "Even so, I might be inclined to take your word, except for one thing. While the arms and ammunition you sold us are in prime condition, the ammunition does not fit the weapons; together they are worthless. You were attempting to sell us a product which could not be used. That was the final deciding factor in my decision."

"You could be figuring wrong there," Pariseau said. "When I bought that shipment, it had to be done underground; I bought whatever I could get. If you allow me to make other trips you will soon have a wide variety of weapons and most of the ammunition will be useable then."

"Possibly," Kolls said. "But it is another coincidence. Only a fool would allow that many coincidences as probable, and still accept your sincerity of intent. I am not a fool; my decision is that you must die."

"But why?" It was Zelda. "What do you have to lose by letting him go? If he is telling the truth he will bring more of the arms that you desperately need; if he isn't, then all you lose is your revenge."

Kolls did not reply. He merely looked at her long and steadily. Zelda met his look unflinchingly, yet she lost all the color in her cheeks at something she read there.

Kolls turned his back on her and walked out the door.

Zelda walked quickly over to Pariseau. "Listen carefully," she said urgently. "We have only a minute. They will call you outside very soon, and when you go they will kill you. If you stay in here they will come in after you. Your one small chance is that you can surprise them when they open the door by going out quickly, and making a dash for the river."

"They'd shoot me before I reached it," he said. He noted then that she was trembling and put both arms around her.

"No," she said. "They don't have guns. The leaders intend to use your execution as a sport. It will serve as a diversion for the men—so they want you to die slowly. If you can catch them by surprise, you might be able to reach the river and escape."

The door opened and they heard Kolls' voice. "Come out, Zelda."

Suddenly she threw her arms about his waist and hugged him fiercely. She kissed him once—hard—before she pulled herself away. Straightening, and holding herself with a rigid self-control, she walked on stiff, wooden legs through the doorway. The door closed behind her.

Something in her attitude aroused a vague unease in Pariseau's mind and he strode to the window and looked out.

He was just in time to see Kolls bring down a short length of ragged-end pipe in his hand across her face.

The blow acted as a signal and the Lottenbaies bore down on her like a pack of savage beasts of prey. Shouting and screaming they fought to gain a position where they could strike her. She stood unwavering, until she went down under their blows.

They hacked and beat at her lifeless form.

IT HAD HAPPENED so unexpectedly and suddenly that it had caught Pariseau unprepared and frozen where he stood; he could not even turn his eyes away from the sight.

He understood then that she had known that this was going to happen; she had known that when she attempted to shield him, she was risking her own life. And he had thought that the only danger was to himself. But at last the realization of what had happened penetrated, and he felt something within him swell and erupt.

His cheeks paled as his heart drew blood from his head and sent it to the muscles of his body. He attempted to swallow, and his mouth was dry. His glands poured out their adrenalin.

His animal body was preparing itself to fight. It was the same process that all animals, man included, experienced in the presence of danger. The only difference was that most men associated the reaction with fear, and were afraid. They used the extra energy and strength to flee. And they were right; they lived to enjoy another day.

But other men, like Pariseau, by their nature, could not flee. They stayed and fought. And while in most men the adrenalin was a quick flow, in him it was a tide.

Pariseau recognized the chemical change in his muscles for what it was. He knew that the rage that held him was not a blind thing, but rather an instinctive reaction, and that instinct was least liable to error in matters of survival. Where survival was concerned it was more acute than his reasoning powers ever could be.

He felt the tide sweep into his brain and he willingly let it carry all reason before it. There was almost a picture in his mind of that reasoning portion of his brain being swept into a remote corner of his skull where it hung,

trapped, only an interested spectator in what was about to happen.

The moment had not quite come when it would turn amuck.

Now he stared out of eyes that were calm—but clearly showed the tiger just below the surface—and discovered quickly what he must do.

He strode across the room to his cot and turned it on its side. Along the bottom of the cot ran two heavy metaloid runners, placed there to give weight and stability to the piece. He rested both feet on the lower runner, bent his back and, with palms facing out, wrapped his powerful fingers around the upper bar. He straightened and the bar came loose with a screeching of tortured, torn metal.

The weapon he held in his hands must have weighed well over thirty pounds, yet he hefted it a quarter way down its length as though it were weightless. At the far end hung a strip of pliable metaloid whose function had been to shorten or lengthen the bed to fit the sleeper's form.

Pariseau was not quite satisfied with the balance of his weapon and he bent the metaloid end around the shaft and looped the tip beneath the final twist. This time when he hefted it in his two hands he was satisfied.

WHEN THE door opened, Pariseau was waiting. He walked slowly out. Suddenly the clamor stopped. The green men looked up, and their faces showed that they knew they were facing something primeval: something above and beyond anything imagined possible, in a human or humanoid.

It was the potential of wanton, fear-some, destruction that awed them, and from the beginning the Lottenbaies were on the defensive.

Pariseau singled out his man, Kolls, standing midway back in the crowd. He raised his metal bar and advanced.

Kolls yelled in his own language, and abruptly the spell was broken. The green men did not advance but they

began yelling to give themselves courage and raised their pipes, clubs, and makeshift weapons to meet the advancing engine of destruction.

Pariseau lifted his heavy bar with both hands and swung it viciously, laying its weight against the first of the green men that opposed him. They were not cowards, however, and now that their momentary funk had left them, they fought back ferociously. Only the speed and power with which Pariseau swung his weapon enabled him to stand up against them.

But as the fight heightened in fury, Pariseau's strength seemed to increase—the berserk thing within was in full command now—and he beat the green men down and back. The smile on his face was terrible to see.

Not once in all this time had he taken his eyes off Kolls. And finally there came the moment when the bodies of the fallen Lottenbaies tangled in the feet of those still fighting—and suddenly Pariseau was face-to-face with his enemy.

The terror that had been building up in Kolls' brain, as Pariseau slowly fought his way nearer, showed stark and naked on his face now, and it was an act of desperation as he raised the steel pipe in his hand to strike at his avenger.

Pariseau's bar battered the pipe aside and continued on until it struck against the side of Kolls' head, and Kolls was dead while he still stood on his feet.

Pariseau slashed three more savage blows into the mob—and he had broken through.

The factor within him that demanded his survival—his instinct of self-preservation—acted then, and he dropped his bar and sprinted to the river bank and dove in. The current of the mighty river swept him down and under. He went down and down until the breath left his lungs and he knew that he would never be able to reach the top again. Yet he did.

His conscious mind had been flogged until it was buried beneath great black clouds of oblivion, yet his body continued to fight, and at last his head broke above the raging waters.

He sucked the life-giving air into his lungs and regained a glimpse of consciousness before he was carried down once more as the river swept him around a bend. This time he reached the surface still conscious.

He was able to keep his body afloat now and he let the river carry him away from the Lottenbaie encampment. Only when he was miles down the stream did he crawl out onto the bank.

FOR EIGHT days Pariseau walked through the woods and brush. During that time he slept only when completely exhausted; he ate the berries he found as he went along.

He set his course by the landmarks he had located during his flight with Kolls in the Benz. Toward the end, when his strength threatened to leave him, he kept going by pretending that the next landmark would be the last. And then the next. And the next.

During the afternoon of the eighth day he came to one of the broad glass highways and stood in the path of the first mobile to come into sight.

When it stopped he walked over to its side and said to the driver, "I've got to have a ride; I'll pay."

The driver stared back at him with wide, apprehensive eyes, but did not argue as Pariseau climbed into the rear seat without waiting for a reply. "Wake me just before we get to the city," Pariseau said, and was asleep as he finished.

Rex Major's sun was making long shadows along the road when the driver woke Pariseau. "The city's about a mile ahead," he said.

Pariseau shook the sleep from his brain and sat up. "Good work," he muttered. "How much do I owe you?"

"A five will do."

He gave the driver a twenty and

climbed out. Mingled pleasure and relief were etched on the man's face as he drove away.

Pariseau stood for a time debating whether he should crawl under a bush and sleep, as he felt like doing, or try to get back into the city immediately. He decided quickly not to risk going through the gate again. His best course of action would be to locate the tunnel under the wall. But it might be dark before he succeeded in finding it. He looked around him.

He was lucky. The tall fir reared its bushy head fifty yards from where he stood. He walked over and let himself into the shack at the edge of the clearing; two hours later he was in his room asleep.

7



ESSE ASKED, "How do you feel?"

"Not too bad," Pariseau answered. He stretched his legs out on the bed and reached his arms toward the ceiling in a back-arching stretch. "I'm a little stiff and sore yet, but I'll be

all right."

The relaxing chair in which Hesse slouched had expanded to its limit to conform with his lounging shape. His shoulders seemed to have absorbed his neck, and his large head rested against the ridge of his collarbone. "Two days isn't time enough to give you the rest you need," he said; "you should have at least a couple months."

"I'll be fine," Pariseau said.

"It has always been my theory," Hesse mused, in the tone that told Pariseau that the old man had been delving into the philosophy that was so essential a part of his nature, "that courage is as expendable as physical strength. You have poured out the equivalent of several years of that

courage during the past few weeks, and now it must be at its last frayed ends. I'm afraid for you, lad. Perhaps we should stop now."

Pariseau watched with a great affection how the harsh strength lines about Hesse's mouth softened when he spoke; watched the unease that haunted the blue eyes of this man who had never known fear for himself.

He rose and walked over to the old man. "I'm as fit and ready now as I've ever been," he said, laying an affectionate hand on the bulky shoulder. He made an attempt to turn the conversation to a topic less disquieting for Hesse. "Are the humans getting the unity they need yet?" he asked.

"They've made great progress," Hesse answered. "They're fully alerted to their danger now. Rex Major's delegates have convinced the other worlds that the invasion of the Lottenbaies is imminent, and not a danger of the indefinite future."

"Then our work is finished?"

"Not quite; they still need time. The Arcturian sector has a loose commercial federation and have been able to move fast. They are sending help immediately, but it won't be enough—alone. The other worlds are acting, but it will be weeks before they can assemble ships, men and equipment—and get them here. Also they should have additional time to build military bases on the rim worlds. We've got to find some way to buy that time."

"You know I have never had any doubt about the worth of anything you believe is necessary," Pariseau said thoughtfully, after a minute's contemplation, "but my contribution to this project of ours has been very nearly all confined to the physical side. I've never been too clear in my own mind why we are doing it. Why should we people of Ox II be so determined to maintain the status quo in the galaxy? We ourselves are not interested in racial expansion, and why should the welfare of the humans mean more to

us than that of other races—the Lottenbaies included? Why should we be so determined to keep the humans in a dominant position when, by their own admission, they are decadent?"

HESSE HESITATED, searching for the words he wanted. "You," he said, "have touched a point that often troubles me. The search for truth, and the decision as to what is right and what is wrong, is a long march through the night. We can never be certain, after we've made a decision, whether we've acted wisely or not.

"But there are, I suppose, two ways of explaining why we decided as we did in this instance. First, I'll take the moral basis. We believe in heaven, but it is a heaven that does not exist yet, and which will come into existence only when all men are prepared to attain it. It is a foolhardy moral code that prompts a man to strive alone for that heaven. We must help others—carry them up with us—if our strength is greater than theirs. Otherwise there will be no heaven waiting when we are ready.

"From a more practical viewpoint," Hesse continued, straightening up in his chair to emphasize his words, "the decadence of the humans which you mentioned is not as real as it is obvious. That decadence exists only insofar as their will to strife and conquest is concerned; on the higher plane, in cultural attainment, they are still on the upward curve. And, as the dominant race in the galaxy, they rule with a relatively gentle hand: theirs is a more benevolent dominance than that of any immediate successors is likely to be.

"A race," Hesse said, "is like a growing man. It takes time and the living of countless generations for it to grow up. If the humans are superseded, it must be done by another race at least as culturally mature. The Lottenbaies, as a case in question, are too young and barbaric, with the attendant

cruelty and savagery, to be allowed further expansion for thousands of years yet."

Hesse sagged back into his familiar slump. "And those," he said, "are the reasons why we decided on intervention."

"I understand it better now," Pariseau said. "But you mentioned that the humans need more time. Have you a plan for getting it?"

"I have," Hesse answered, "but I hesitate to use it—in view of what you have been through already. Why," he asked, his voice momentarily angry, "did our council see fit to place this huge burden on the shoulders of only two men—and one of them, myself, practically helpless?"

"You are far from helpless," Pariseau said. "You were chosen for this mission because of the council's confidence in you. My physical contribution is a small thing beside the brains and tactical ability you contribute."

Hesse shook his head vigorously to clear the gloom from his spirits. "Whatever the reason, we'll have to do the best we can with what we've got," he said. "But once again the bulk of the effort must be furnished by you."

"The original natives of Rex Major, the Slaggs," Hesse went on, "by a happy concurrence for the Lottenbaies, have achieved unity now for the first time since the humans settled here. The reports we have been able to gather tell us that they have united under the banner of a native chieftain called Mulehead. That's not his real name, of course, but we can't pronounce it as it is in the Slagg dialect; it sounds something like 'Mulehead' to us, so that's what we call him."

"The Lottenbaies have taken advantage of that Slagg unity, and won the friendship of Mulehead, by gifts, and by supplying him with arms. Through insidious maneuvering they have convinced him that the humans are his deadly enemies, and that they must be driven from the planet. The en-

campment of the Slaggs you saw is proof of the success of that maneuvering, and also indication that they will be ready to move very soon now."

"There's no possibility that primitive tribesmen can overrun the city, considering the superior weapons and technocracy the humans have, is there?" Pariseau asked.

"I suppose not," Hesse answered. "But they can do considerable damage, such as destroying the crops outside the city, and by guerrilla action. They might even be able to hold the city in seige. The Lottenbaies expect the Slaggs, if not to overrun the city, to do enough damage, and drain the humans' resources, so that they will have little trouble moving in themselves and taking over."

"And what more do you think we can do to prevent it?" Pariseau asked.

"The Slagg unity," Hesse said, "rests on a slender thread—that thread is the personality and prestige of Mulehead. If he should die, the tribes would be at each others' throats in a minute." He paused and turned his blue gaze at Pariseau.

"And so?" Pariseau said. But he already knew the answer.

"And so you'll have to kill Mulehead."

THE SHOPKEEPER was short, bulky, and completely bald—very obviously another member of the race of Ox II.

"This is my colleague," Hesse told the shopkeeper. "You already know our purpose here on Rex Major."

The man nodded. "I was wondering when you would need my help."

"I want you to disguise him to look like a Slagg. Can you do it well enough so that he can get by—among the Slaggs themselves?"

"I believe I can," the shopkeeper said. "The job won't be perfect, of course. There are certain characteristics of the Slaggs, such as their long buck teeth, and length of arms, that I

can't do anything about. But I should be able to fix him up so that he can, as you say, get by."

Hesse shrugged. "It will have to do, Molla," he said.

The shopkeeper pressed a button beneath a glass counter and the front door lock closed with a dull click, and the windows assumed a milky, opaque consistency. "Come into the back room," he said.

In the small room in the rear Molla pulled a long, low table from a wall slot. "Take off your clothes," he said to Pariseau, "and lie down here—on your stomach."

Pariseau pulled down the zipper on the front of his suit without answering. He usually left most of the talking to his superior. While he undressed, Molla pulled out a wall cabinet and began removing equipment from its drawers.

Pariseau lay on the table and Molla took a short, hairy, tuft from one of the drawers. "This will be your most vulnerable point," he said, smiling at the words. "It's your tail."

He bent then and carefully fitted the vacuum cup built into one end of the tail at the base of Pariseau's spine. He reinforced it with a quick-drying cement which he forced down tight around the cup's edges. "That's the best we can do," he said, "but it should hold; now stand up."

Pariseau slid down from the table and stood waiting.

Molla approached with a large jar in his hand. "Stand out a ways," he directed. "And hold your hands out from your body. Spread your legs." He paused. "Almost forgot something," he said. He returned to the cabinet and took a pair of shorts, hair-covered, from one of the drawers. The bottom of the shorts had a long open seam. Spreading them out on the table he smeared the inside with a handful of brown paste from his jar.

"Put these on," he said, returning to Pariseau. Pariseau took the shorts and slipped into them.

The shopkeeper scooped another handful of the paste and began spreading it over Pariseau's shoulders.

Hesse had been watching all this with interest. Now his nostrils wrinkled distastefully. "That stuff certainly stinks," he said. "Couldn't they have made it less potent?"

"He'd be conspicuous by its absence if he didn't have this stink," Molla answered. "The Slaggs aren't noted for their cleanliness; no self-respecting Slagg would ever let himself get so clean that you couldn't smell him at forty paces."

Molla continued his work until Pariseau was covered with the gummy, brown ointment. He returned to the cabinet and brought back a shaggy blanket of long brown hair. Draping the blanket around Pariseau's shoulders he began pressing the fabric into the glue. With a pair of scissors he cut and shaped the cloth, patching and covering, until every inch of Pariseau's body—his face included—was covered.

Finally Molla stepped back and inspected his handiwork. "That should do it," he said. "You'll have to stand there for about ten minutes until the glue hardens. After it once sets, it will hold as fast as the Slaggs' own hide. Also it will be porous, so you'll have no respiratory trouble."

"That'll never fool anyone, particularly a Slagg," Hesse said irritably. "That blanket material is pretty obvious."

"True," Molla agreed. "But the job isn't finished yet. Wait until that glue hardens."

A quarter-hour later Molla led Pariseau to a shower and turned on the warm water.

At the first touch of the water the material of the blanket between the hair began to melt away. Soon it was all gone. Pariseau stepped out. His body was still covered with the long brown hair—and it looked as authentic as though it had grown there.

8



THE FIRST streaks of dawn were breaking when Hesse and Pariseau came out onto the roof of the skyscraper and walked over to the waiting Benz. Pariseau wore a long cape with a folding hood that complete-

ly hid his body and face.

He climbed into the copter and was caught unprepared when Hesse followed. "You aren't coming with me, are you?"

Hesse nodded.

"But why?"

"I have a strange feeling about this trip," Hesse replied glumly. "I don't think you're coming back, and my hunches are very seldom wrong. If you don't come back I'll die like a lonely old animal. So—I'm going with you."

Pariseau knew enough about the old man to know that it was useless to argue; yet he had to try. "This is a one-man job," he said. "If I can't do it alone there'll be no way you can help me. There's no reason why you should risk your life needlessly."

"Don't waste time," Hesse answered gruffly.

Pariseau hesitated, then rested his hand on the big fellow's knee affectionately and kicked in the plane's elevator bar.

For four hours they picked their way from one landmark to another, until they reached the edge of the territory where Pariseau remembered the Slaggs and Lottenbaies were encamped. Carefully they skirted the edge and brought the Benz down a couple miles to the rear.

They spent the first few hours after landing camouflaging the Benz with tree limbs. Then they lay in the shade

of a thick bush and went over their plans.

"Don't rush into this thing when you get there," Hesse warned. "Make a survey of the territory and plan some way out before you do anything else. If they catch you harming their chief—or even discover your disguise—they'll tear you to pieces. So act only when you have at least a reasonably good chance of getting away."

Pariseau grunted an agreement. His hairy covering was beginning to itch under the armpits, and he was perspiring freely.

"You can understand a little of the Slagg dialect, so that should be some help," Hesse said. "But don't try to speak it; that would give you away immediately. Pretend you're dumb. That happens among the Slaggs the same as it does any place else."

Pariseau nodded. "Isn't this pretty rough on Mulehead?" he asked.

"Don't let your conscience bother you about that," Hesse said incisively. "When Mulehead decided to start this war he was asking for anything he gets; I wish we had the opportunity to do the same to other war-inciters."

During most of the afternoon they drowsed in their shade. And in the early evening Pariseau made ready to leave.

"Do what scouting you can tonight yet," Hesse gave his last minute instructions. "The night will be your best protection."

"I'll wait three days. If you aren't back by that time I'll know you didn't make it. I'll fly the Benz over the encampment and try to locate Mulehead. If I succeed I'll make an attempt to kill him by crash-landing the Benz on him."

Pariseau shook his head mournfully but he knew it was useless to argue.

HUGE BRUSH fires guided Pariseau to the encampment.

The Slaggs, he soon found, did not mingle too freely. Most individuals

kept fairly close to the strips of territory occupied by their tribe. However, none showed suspicion as he wandered among them. An all-pervading stink of discarded refuse, urea, and unwashed bodies hung like a pall over the entire encampment.

He located Mulehead's tent the second hour. It was at the edge of the Slagg territory, not too far from where they had landed the Benz. But that was one area that a stranger could not invade. The dwellings of Mulehead's personal tribe surrounded his tent and they guarded it closely. There was no possibility of approaching any nearer than a quarter-mile.

As the darkness of night deepened, the Slaggs began a slow drift toward a large natural hollow in the earth that formed a giant amphitheater. There seemed to be an excitement that ran through them and an air of expectation in the intent way they sat, or stood milling restlessly, when they reached there. Pariseau wondered what caused it. He decided to move with them.

Before he reached the edge of the hollow he noted that he was hungry. Walking to a smaller fire he picked up a pointed stick and fished in a large black pot until he pulled out a chunk of grisly meat. A Slagg standing by the fire, poking at it with a blackened stick, barked something at him, but Pariseau hunched his shoulders and pointed at his mouth. For a minute the Slagg continued to glare at him and Pariseau felt his muscles tighten. Finally the Slagg growled and turned back to poking the fire.

Pariseau walked away chewing on his meat and drifted with the crowd until he found a place to sit at the lip of the large hollow among the restless tribesmen.

Directly across was the camping place of Mulehead and his tribe. Now there was a platform in front of the chieftain's green tent, and on the platform rested a figure that Pariseau could see only dimly from that dis-

tance. But, by the attention the others were paying to him, Pariseau surmised that it must be Mulehead. He, too, was interested in the coming event—whatever it might be.

None of the Slaggs paid any attention to Pariseau. All of their interest centered on the hollow. They were clearly waiting for something that was about to happen.

When it did Pariseau found himself watching as intently as the others. A Slagg—a great, shaggy brute, bigger than any human, or humanoid, Pariseau had ever seen—walked out into the middle of the amphitheater, and a mighty shout went up from the tribesmen at the edges.

Pariseau understood what they were shouting: "Champion! Champion! Champion!"

This then was the Slagg champion. Pariseau could readily understand how he must be. The savage was so huge and mightily-muscled that it seemed no other would have a chance to stand up against him. It would be like trying to strike down a building.

The Slagg champion walked slowly,



arrogantly, to the center of the clearing. There he paused and raised his head, disdaining to acknowledge the cheers of the howling tribesmen. He turned deliberately and, pausing for a moment in each of the four directions of the compass, gazed into the far distances. After the final pause he raised his head and bellowed out a thunderous roar that drowned out the shouting of those around him.

This was the challenge.

As the roar died the spectators quieted into an almost breathless stillness. They waited expectantly.

FOR SEVERAL minutes there was no answering sound. Only a wave of murmurs that swept through the crowd. Several of the huge males near Pariseau looked uneasily at each other but none of them rose. He understood very soon from the few words he could grasp of their language that the champion had killed—with too great an ease—all earlier challengers. Now none seemed to have the courage to meet him.

Suddenly a young Slagg at Pariseau's left sprang to his feet and began pacing back and forth before one of the fires.

He was a magnificent specimen, taller than most of his fellows, and built lithe and quick-muscled. He looked the picture of an efficient, wicked fighter.

Slowly the heads of the savages in the vicinity turned his way and watched as he paced before the fire, up to the edge of the hollow, and back. Then Pariseau caught an interplay that he had missed at first. At the edge of the fire sat a young female Slagg. Her hair was a lighter brown than the others, but to Pariseau that was her only distinguishing feature; other than that, she was as ugly as the rest.

But to the pacing young Slagg she must have represented a very desirable bit of femininity, for it was obvious that all his display was for her

edification. Each time he paused in his pacing he sent a long glance at the female. She would let her head drop coyly then, but raise it after a moment and look back at him from under bulging, shaggy tufts.

In the center of the arena the champion stood stolidly. His attention had been drawn to the pacing tribesman and now he watched, showing neither impatience nor apprehension.

Finally the young Slagg built himself up to a frenzy of excitement and turned to face the champion. He raised his head and roared—and the champion had an answer to his challenge.

The eyes of the thousands followed the challenger's slow progress down the sides of the amphitheater. This was the moment for which they had waited.

When the two gladiators were but a few yards apart the challenger stopped. Both bent their bodies in the middle until their long muscular arms touched the ground. Slowly they began to circle each other, with their legs crooked like crouching animals. The long hairs on their heads had risen and now stood erect, making their heads appear twice their actual size.

Suddenly the young Slagg sprang in, driving his shoulder toward the other's midriff. The champion disdainfully brought his right arm around in a clubbing motion and knocked the challenger to the ground.

The young Slagg sprang to his feet before the champion could follow up his advantage and they began circling once more.

Abruptly the two were locked together and straining mightily against each other. It became apparent soon, however, that the young Slagg was no match for the champion in this kind of struggle, where only pure strength counted.

The champion began to slowly force his adversary back. Frantically the young Slagg jerked one hand free from the circling arms around him and dug his fingers into the other's face. When

his fingers reached the eyes the champion flung him aside.

This time the challenger was unable to keep his footing and the champion sprang in again, locking his right arm around his opponent's waist and bringing his left forearm up under his chin. With a sudden burst of effort he forced the challenger's head back.

The young Slagg was unable to open his mouth but when the pressure reached its peak a scream forced its way through his clenched teeth and nostrils. The scream ended suddenly as the neck snapped—so audibly that Pariseau could hear it from where he sat.

The fight was over.

The champion picked up the limp body and tossed it over his shoulder. Gravely he turned to face Mulehead. He began walking solemnly upward: up the side of the hollow until he reached the foot of Mulehead's platform. Here he dumped the body of the fallen gladiator on the ground and stood waiting. This, Pariseau decided, was part of the Slagg ceremony of competition for championship.

Mulehead raised one hand grandly and shouted out a string of monosyllables in a high, woman's voice. The only word Pariseau understood was "Mulehead."

As the crowd moved away from the hollow Pariseau noted that the young Slagg female was giving another male the look from under her shaggy tufts.

PARISEAU found a place to sleep that night near the fringes of two adjoining tribes and none questioned his right to be there.

He slept well and during the next day continued his scouting. He risked going around behind the camping place of Mulehead and his tribe but could get no nearer than a hundred yards. If all else failed, he decided, he might try a dash through the tents and huts here, but he doubted very much that he would ever be able to reach the



chief. He continued his roaming among the tribes. By evening he had decided on a plan of action.

That evening the tribes again gathered at the circular hollow and waited.

After a time the champion came out, went through the preliminary ceremonies, and issued his challenge.

Pariseau rose to his feet and roared back an answer!

The Slaggs deferentially cleared a path for him as he went to the edge of the pit and walked down.

As Pariseau reached him the Slagg champion went into a crouch and slowly began circling his challenger. Pariseau stood erect and, except for pivoting to keep facing him, appeared almost uninterested in the other's actions. Suddenly the Slagg lunged heavily.

Pariseau made no effort to avoid the rush and allowed his opponent to wrap both arms about his body. But, before the Slagg could apply a back-breaking pressure, Pariseau hunched his body into a tight crouch. Resting his head on the Slagg's hairy chest, he spread his arms to free his shoulders and hammered six blows into his adversary's stomach.

At the first blow, Pariseau felt the body above him shudder. At the second the arms circling him jerked free. And at the third the champion swayed.

The last three, mighty, vessel-rupturing blows were driven with the full weight of Pariseau's pivoting body behind them.

Blood gushed from the Slagg's open mouth and splattered on Pariseau's shoulders.

He bent forward, caught the sagging body over his shoulder and straight-

ened with it resting there. The roars of the cheering Slaggs came at him from all sides as he walked up the bank of the amphitheater toward the large green tent at the top.

When he reached Mulehead's platform he dropped the body of the Slagg champion to the ground. For the first time then, Pariseau was close enough to see the features of the chieftain.

Mulehead's face was scarred and mean-looking in the firelight. One cheek sagged inward where teeth were missing, and grease ran from a bone he was chewing, down his chin and onto his hairy chest. He raised one hand and opened his mouth to speak.

Unhurriedly Pariseau reached toward the hair-covered shorts he wore and ripped loose a strip of the top edge. From a pocket formed by the dried paste he pulled a small finger-sized object and aimed. A split-second later the hair on the crown of Mulehead's head parted violently as a bullet tore into his skull.

For a moment even those around Mulehead did not realize what had happened. Then, as Pariseau moved forward, two Slaggs sprang to their feet. The look of consternation on their faces was giving way to rage as Pariseau reached them and he drove them aside with his shoulder. He ran straight forward—into the green tent of the dead chieftain.

He never paused as he ran through the tent and squeezed out beneath the flap at the rear. Once out among the dwellings of the chieftain's tribesmen a Slagg ran from behind one of the huts to intercept him, but Pariseau struck him down and a minute later was lost in the thick brush.

He found Hesse sitting at the controls of the Benz, almost as though he had been waiting.

"Take it up," Pariseau said. "The job's finished."

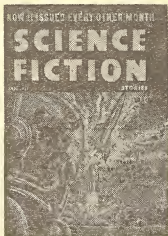


NOW !! ISSUED EVERY OTHER MONTH

The response to our first issues of this pocket-sized magazine has left no doubt as to its popularity.

Look for the new bi-monthly issue on your newsstands now. If your dealer does not have copies, send 35c to COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, Inc., 241 Church St., New York 13, N. Y.

All issues will contain ONLY BRAND NEW STORIES. The current number features such topnotch authors as



M. C. Pease
Ward Moore

Irving Cox, Jr.
Winston K. Marks



SCIENCE FICTION STORIES



You've read stories before, no doubt, about none-too-careful amateur "scientists" fooling around with undetermined drugs. Well, that's what this story is about — and we hope you'll be properly horrified at the ghastly fate of Andy Custer. We say we *hope* you will be, because people around this office weren't — even when they stopped laughing.

THE FISSION OF MRS. CUSTER

by Winston Marks

illustrated by Milton Luros

CONSIDERING the unscientific way Andy Custer was throwing *Colchicine* around, it wasn't too remarkable that his wife was included in the experiments. *Colchicine* is that new drug they administer to plants. It produces mutations once every nine tries—instead of once out of about 900,000, as happens when plants are left to grow with their notorious lack of imagination.

If Hedda Custer hadn't been a vegetable, she might have escaped the horrendous fate her husband unwittingly prepared for her. But as the biological world goes, even lacking roots and chlorophyll, Hedda Custer was a vegetable. It never entered Andy's mind that he shouldn't.

Bodyguard and valet to the millionaire seed-grower was Torpedo Thomas, who had never completely got over his last position, driving truck for a small-

time hi-jacker. His blunt manner, while reassuring to the body being guarded—in this case, Andy Custer's—tended to minimize the amenities.

Torpedo was the only one to discover Custer's unique intentions. He came upon his gaunt, dyspeptic employer at the kitchen sink one night. "Hello, Custard. Watcha doin' with the atomizer?" he inquired.

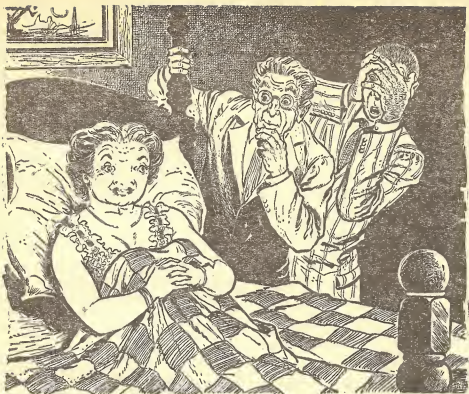
"I am adulterating my wife's perfume," Custer admitted confidentially.

"Kind of a nasty trick."

"Don't get me wrong; I'm not stinking it up. This is an experiment." Wise or unwise, Custer kept no secrets from his bodyguard. He stabbed into a tiny bottle with a fine medicine-dropper. "I'm adding a teensy bit of that new alkaloid we're using at the greenhouse. You know, *colchicine*."

"Why?"

"I'm trying it out on a lot of differ-



No doubt at all about it — Hedda Custer was broadening!

ent things. Getting some remarkable results. Added sixty-two new varieties of marigolds to our seed catalog this year for one thing."

"Oh yeah. That stuff. I'd lay off that perfume, though. Whadda you shootin' for, sixty-two varieties of kids? Naw, you don't want to do that, Cus-tard."

"You're a little late." Custer left Torpedo to ponder and rifle the refrigerator. As the amateur chemist climbed the stairs to his wife's bedroom, he decided it was almost time to begin looking for symptoms. This was, as he'd intimated to his valet, nearer the end than the beginning of the experiment.

Hedda Custer had been delighted with her husband's sudden proposal to raise a family. Blissfully ignorant of Andy's motives, she devoted her days to knitting, planning and unsuspectingly absorbing minute but persistent

quantities of *colchicine*. The substance came to her in her tea, in her consomme, in her bath salts, in her vanishing cream—and now in her perfume. Insidiously it was ingested into every cell of her two-hundred and eight pounds of pink flesh, secretly applied by every botanical technique at Andy's command. At the greenhouse they soaked the seeds, bathed the stems, sprayed the buds. These were Custer's adaptations.

"Hedda, I fixed your atomizer."

"Thank you, Andy." She hadn't known it was broken, but that was Andy for you—anticipating trouble, always fixing things, protecting her from every petty annoyance. It was the same way when he was just a poor truck-gardener, always hovering over his radish-fields, spraying, weeding, dusting with the detached tenderness of an agrarian nursemaid.

"Hedda, don't you think you'd bet-

ter start staying in bed. You're not as young as you were, you know, and this might be—"

"If you say so, Andy."

So Hedda took to bed. There was no sign yet, but Hedda took to bed and stayed there, content to lie placid, thoughtful and fruitful with the unhurried, unbored patience of a watermelon ripening on the vine.

Grossly dissatisfied with his own physical attributes and his wife's mental languor, a single motive abetted by a consuming curiosity had led him to feed her the drug. He'd always wanted children—but *not like Hedda and not like himself*. New personalities! Why not? *Colchicine* was making his seed business thrive with all the new varieties it produced. Why not a smart, pretty baby from a stupid momma and an ugly poppa?

FATE LEFT it to Torpedo Thomas to discover Hedda Custer's first symptoms. Back from his two weeks vacation, he paid his respects to his mistress and noted: "Say, Toots, ain't you broader between the eyes than you used to be?"

Hedda stared at him uncomprehendingly and commented, "It's nice you are back, Mr. Torpedo."

Torpedo looked up his boss. "Mustard, something's wrong with your Missus. She don't look so good; she's getting broad."

"Heavens, I hadn't noticed!" Custer ganged his happy, withered limbs up the stairs and demanded, "Why didn't you tell me, Hedda?" He stopped short. Eyes closed, his wife lay like a long ant-hill that has been creased longitudinally along its median axis—by a small steam-roller, perhaps. She was neither longer nor thicker; she was broader. Her eye-sockets were outside her pince-nez on either side. The perpetual, uncomprehending smile had widened to a generous six inches across, and her first two chins were stretching a little taut.

Custer stared wildly about. "Torpedo, get a doctor quick."

"He's on the way; you don't think I'd just let her lay there like that?"

A moment later Dr. Houble joined them at the foot of Hedda's bed. Dr. Houble was a mouse of a man with a moose of a medical reputation. "What's the matter here?"

Custer couldn't speak. Torpedo offered, "She's getting broader."

"Yes, and it's a pity; but it's hardly a symptom."

"You don't get it; she's widening out—fast."

"Nothing a little dieting won't—" And then Dr. Houble saw just how wide Torpedo meant. He moved to the left for perspective and then back to the bedpost for support.

Custer asked, "What is it, doctor? My word, what is it?"

"Mumps, I hope." He lied in his teeth, and they knew it.

Torpedo kept staring at Custer. Finally he tugged at the millionaire's sleeve and nodded at the door; Custer allowed himself to be led into his own room across the hall.

"Don't you think you'd better tell him, Custard?"

"About what?"

"About that colchistuff. Just what was that stuff supposed to do, anyhow?"

"In plants it doubles up on the chromosomes. You see, before the cell splits, the chromosomes split, so each half of the cell gets a full number of the original chromosomes. But once out of every nine times or so, colchicine causes the cell *not* to split when it's supposed to. Then the cell has twice as many chromosomes, and these are what produce mutations, new characteristics."

"Is your wife a cell?"

"In a sense, yes." Custer was aware that he'd spoken Greek.

"Then it ain't working right; it's working backwards."

Custer looked at him sharply. "Nonsense!"

"The part about not splitting."

"Oh, my God!"

"Huh?"

"Mitosis."

"Your toes is what?"

"Mitosis means binary—"

"—fission," Dr. Houble supplied sliding through the one fifth-opened door without touching it. "Binary fission is correct. It is also impossible," he added blankly. "Absurd! She can't. I won't let—I've been at Mayo's—in Vienna, before Hitler—it's atrocious. Good gallstones, what have you been doing to her, man? Let's get back; I want to see this. No I don't. Yes. I suppose so at that."

THEY FILED back to poor Hedda's room. The bed seemed smaller. None of them dared draw back the bedclothes; her quilted outline was devastating enough.

"I don't know why this should bother me so," Houble complained. "Amoeba! A million amoeba do it every second; I've seen them."

"Well I ain't. I'm going downstairs. Geez," Torpedo grunted.

It took a week. Houble ordered strict secrecy; the servants were told of a grave illness; only Torpedo came and went with food. Custer and Houble slept sitting up near the bed. After the fifth day there were two mouths into which to ladle quarts of soup and gallons of milk. The patient, though comatose, exhibited a colossal appetite indicated by an almost incessant smacking of lips.

It wasn't a nice thing to watch. Torpedo, after the second day, began backing into the room with the soup kettles. On the fifth day he couldn't resist one peek around. He said, "Holy!" That was all, and he didn't look again.

The sixth day the bodies were apart, and for twenty-four hours Custer and Houble stood vigil. Joined only by a common arm, the rapid growth neces-

sitated shifting the bodies apart every few minutes to decrease the lateral pressure. By morning there was only a common hand, and at noon ten fingertips fluttered and divorced themselves into two hands.

Instantly two full-blown, pink Heddas sat up, stared down at the ripped half a negligee each wore and squeaked in unison, "Andy, who's that man?"

Torpedo backed in with a tray and tripped over Custer's body landing flush on Houble's.

"Torpedo, Mr. Custer has fainted," said two voices that sounded as one. Heddas' voices.

Torpedo scrambled to his feet and stood at bay. "Yeah, I know; I just stepped on his neck. Houble's out, too."

"Who?"

"Houble. This' quack." Torpedo's emotions had made several quick turns of the gamut and stopped in embarrassment.

"What's the matter, Mr. Torpedo?"

"Well, in the first place—do you know—what happened to you?"

"Yes, of course. I did it, didn't—we?"

"Sure, sure. I'll say you did it!"

LATER, THE five of them held council in the bedroom. There was little coherency of conversation. Dr. Houble—a hollow-eyed, jerky Dr. Houble—was feverishly gathering up the half ream of paper containing his notes and drawings. He kept saying, "It amounts to this: binary fission. It can't happen; it did. Binary fission along the medial line."

Torpedo was a little sick of the repetition. His frayed nerves acknowledged a much more important problem than the biological explanation. His boss was in a jam. Two wives. It wasn't legal. Custer was in too much of a stupor to think yet, but he would; it would probably drive him nuts.

The bodyguard eyed Houble as he shuffled and tapped the edges of his loose-leaf case history. Now if nobody

knew about it—but the doctor *did* know about it. What's more Torpedo had heard him mutter about the Medical Journal, and what a splash it would make when he wrote it up.

"Doc, how much will you take for those papers and that roll of films you took?"

"They are not for sale, Mr. Thomas."

Torpedo leaned against the closed door. "Let's burn them, Houble," he suggested, and he removed and pointed the contents of his shoulder-holster at the doctor.

Houble snatched the film from his pocket and thrust it at Torpedo. "You do it; I am mentally incompetent to handle matches."

With Houble safely committed to bed-rest with no visitors, Torpedo proceeded with plans for secrecy. He thumbed the thirty-pound dictionary in the library and composed a statement for the domestic help. "Mrs. Custer has suffered a serious disfiguration; she don't want nobody to see her." With that he instituted a routine which forbade the intersection of his two mistresses' orbits with those of anyone but himself and her devastated husband; this allowed the Mesdames Custer the freedom of the house provided they observed the time schedule.

It didn't look to Torpedo as if this was so much of a problem after all. True, where there had been only Hedda there were now two Heddass. But he discovered that this was so in substance only. Except for the optical impression, the two women were one, for they moved, spoke, ate, and thought in unison. There was difficulty at narrow doorways, but since Custer and Torpedo never allowed the Heddass to be alone, one of them was always there to force a consecutive passage.

TORPEDO'S troubles came from Custer, not from his wives. After a week, it seemed to the valet that his efforts had gone pretty much for

naught. One night as the four of them were together in the bigamous bedroom, Torpedo sought to probe the state of affairs. "You still worried about people finding out, Custard?"

"Not so much that, Thomas."

"Well, what then? You still look glummer'n the bottom of a home-brew crock."

The Heddass were complacently delving into two similarly-rumpled boxes of chocolates. Custer wandered out through the French doors to the little balcony; Torpedo followed. The millionaire looked with sorrowful eyes out over his modest estate that melted into a vast acreage of greenhouses. He sighed. "Poor Hedda."

"Which one?"

"There's still only one—so far. I don't know what I'm going to do, Thomas; I swear I don't."

"I fixed all that. Nobody's finding out. If they do I'll—"

"Hedda's unhappy; she wanted to know tonight if I didn't love her any more."

"Well don't you?"

"Of course, but not twice as much."

"G'wan, kiss them a couple times, and they'll forget."

"I don't dare. That's just it."

Torpedo squinted. He sensed a complication here, but he couldn't put his finger on it. "You just said that they were both only one person. You ain't afraid they'll get jealous of each other?"

"Exactly. Which one shall I kiss first? You see, Thomas, as long as we can keep their environments absolutely the same, they *are* one person, hardly aware of each other. Hedda has never been one to worry over anything that didn't affect her personal property. She's pretty well shrugged off this whole business. But! Let either half of her get the idea that the other half is going to steal the show, and there'll be trouble."

"Buy everything double," the valet suggested.

"I am single; and I am their personal property."

"Split them up by force. Send one on a vacation for three months with me. Then I'll bring her back and take the other one out."

"That changes their environment. In three months you'd have two different women, sufficiently different at least to be jealous of each other and fight like the devil. Then I *would* be a big-amist."

"Well," Torpedo grunted, "I can only think of one other way out."

Custer looked down at the ex-gangster's powerful hands and misunderstood. "Shut up! Never think of it again; it's quite out of the question."

Torpedo frowned. His wasn't the best idea in the world, he admitted, but he hadn't expected Custer to react so violently. In disgust he climbed over the iron rail and dropped twelve feet to the turf. "I'm going for a walk," he called back sullenly.

TORPEDO strode thoughtfully through the summer night. The air was almost noxious with the heavily mixed scents of a thousand varieties of seed-producing perennials. So the boss was willing to experiment on his poor wife, but he was scared to take a dose of it himself, eh?

Short of knocking off one of the Heddas, this was the best idea he could think of. He knew Custer would never agree to anything like murder. But what was wrong with dunking himself in colch—that damned alcoholoid? Two Custers and two Mrs. Custers. That would even squelch bigamy charges; they could say they were both sets of identical twins. Of course, people would know something was screwy, and the newspapers might get ahold of it. And Mrs. Custer's mother, she wouldn't like it at all; but what the hell could she do about it?

As a matter of fact, Torpedo reminded himself, what could Custer himself do about it if Torpedo insisted upon

this scheme? Custer started this business; let him take the consequences. The authorities wouldn't like it if Torpedo told them the whole story. Custer would have to play ball.

The more he thought about it, the less sympathy he felt towards his employer, and the more pity he had for the practically-widowed Heddas. By morning Torpedo was convinced that Custer didn't even deserve to be asked about it. He could take the same treatment his wife had; she hadn't asked to get herself split down the middle. Okay, let's give Custer a little surprise, too.

Twice during the next month Torpedo caught his employer looking askance at his food. Once it was the mashed potatoes, the other time a plate of the cook's fudge. But Custer didn't catch on, and Torpedo went on dipping and squirting his medicine dropper.

At the end of June when Torpedo drove into the city to report to the parole board, his appearance stirred the memory of a certain Clifton Kahler who was present.

"Say, aren't you Torpedo Thomas?" the detective asked.

"Yeah."

"Where were you the 19th of May?"

Unfortunately for Torpedo, the 19th of May was included in his two weeks' vacation; during that time, a truck full of furs had mysteriously disappeared from the highways. Mr. Clifton Kahler had both the strength of his convictions and the authority to hold Torpedo for three days until they could verify his alibis.

AS HE DROVE Custer's blue roadster back to the estate, Torpedo cursed his luck. It was bad enough to work against 9 to 1 odds with this drug, without having your dosage interrupted for three days. He wondered if he'd have to start all over. When he drove into the five-car garage he noticed that the sedan was missing.

The front door was locked; he had

to wait for the butler. The instant he saw Fleming's face he knew the butler was in the know. Fleming said, "Where have you been? Have you heard the ghastly news about the master?"

"About who?"

"Mr. Custer. They took him to the hospital yesterday; the same terrible thing that happened to the mistress."

"The hospital?" Torpedo shuddered. "Where's Hedda?"

"The Mesdames Custer are in their room; they aren't well."

When he knocked Torpedo got two answers. "Come in!" and "Who's there?" They were both Hedda's voice, but they were not consecutive; they overlapped. Torpedo went in and stared at one Hedda brushing the other's hair. They were propped up in bed.

"So you blabbed."

Only one Hedda answered. "Now don't scold us, Mr. Torpedo; we had to eat. You were gone, and then Mr. Custer took ill. We are feeling badly ourselves."

"Which hospital did they take Custer to?"

"The Coppingham Memorial."

Torpedo Thomas took one long, last horrified stare at the two women on the bed and raced for the coupe. In the city he had to leave his car at a parking-lot four blocks from Coppingham Memorial Hospital. Within that radius cars were jammed, double-parked, parked on sidewalks, cluttering alleys and even run up on the hospital lawn itself.

When he tried to get in the front entrance a corps of strapping interns stopped him. "No visitors today."

"I'm Andy Custer's doctor," Torpedo lied glibly. But not glibly enough.

"You and a thousand other newsmen. Spell enterorrhaphy, doctor."

"E-N-T-E-R-O-R-I-F-F-Y," Torpedo tried valiantly. "Okay, you muggs, so I'm not his doctor. I'm really his

valet, and I got something to tell him. Outa my way!"

"Oh, now you're Custer's valet, eh? Spell pants."

Torpedo had a talent known to some as being "handy with the dukes". Taking advantage of the roar of laughter that threw the interns back on their heels, he made grisly use of this talent. Once through the line he cracked the secondary defense, which was composed of three more attendants at the information desk. Playing safety for Coppingham was a lone Filipino at the elevator. Torpedo didn't even bother stiff-arming him. He slammed the gate shut, threw over the lever and demanded, "What floor's Custer on?"

A crafty gleam in the operator's eye flickered out after one brave second. "Six."

TORPEDO raced from the elevator full into a quorum of the American Medical Association; sensibly he proceeded in the direction of greatest resistance. The tense, bewhiskered men he shouldered aside mumbled in bewildered tones. One tight knot which blocked him was engaged in an argument. Torpedo was forced to stop and listen. Finally he cut in, "Sure, you dopes. Sure, it's binary fission. And we got to stop it!"

He had spoken out boldly, trumpeted the phrase that every physician was almost silently mouthing. At "binary fission" ten million dollars worth of medical consultation stopped. A space melted in front of him, and as he plunged eagerly into it the crowd gave way. He found himself at the swinging doors he must be seeking. A hard lunge cracked the human barrier inside. Torpedo entered the packed surgery theater. Here it was merely a matter of worming his way; everyone was too engrossed to give effective resistance.

Poor Custer lay naked, the brightly illuminated center of attraction. Torpedo vaulted the gallery rail.

"Custard!" His employer's eyes fluttered. His face was broader, all right, but the fission wasn't as far along as the valet had feared.

"Can you hear me, Custard?" Torpedo slapped down two annoying pairs of hands that tried to pull him away.

"What is it, Thomas?" Custer asked thickly.

"I got something to tell you."

"I know. I know. You've been doping me with *colchicine*. Damed fool trick, Thomas! Not the solution at all."

"I'll say it ain't, Custard. Listen to me. You got to tell these quacks about what I did; maybe they can stop this split. You ain't so far along yet."

"I told them. They can't do anything. They won't believe me—until it's over. Anyway, what are you excited about? This is what you wanted, isn't it?"

Torpedo looked around him, up into the indistinct faces in the gallery. "Can't you monkeys do nothing about

poor Custard?"

The rumble of debate rose a pitch, but no voice spoke out to him.

"Geez, boss, I'm sorry!"

"Forget it."

"I keep imagining what it'll be like," moaned Torpedo.

"Being twins? Oh I'll get used to it, I suppose."

"Yeah, twins won't be so bad. But how about when you're quadruplets, and then 8 guys and then sixteen—?"

Custer's smile was hideously wide and mirthless. "What makes you think that will happen?"

"Well, your wife—your wives—are startin' to do it again."

Custer's over-wide shoulders heaved up sharply. "What?"

"Yeah. Gettin' wide in the pan. Both of them."

"Oh, Lord 'in Heaven!"

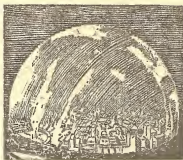
"Geez, boss," Torpedo whimpered, "you'll *never* catch up!"



Here's A Thrilling Book-Length Novel

Never before published in book form — now available in a *fully illustrated, pocket-size edition*.

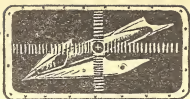
Two men and a woman return to Earth to find everything gone except a strange and unheard-of



CITY OF GLASS

A Science Fiction Novel by Noel Loomis

This book will be on sale at all newsstands soon. You can insure your copy by sending 35¢ to Columbia Publications, Inc., 241 Church Street, New York 13, New York.



INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION

A Department For The Science Fictionist

by Robert A. Madle

SCIENCE FICTION SPOTLIGHT

BOOKS IN THE MAKING: Bob Olsen, who wrote s-f stories about ants a quarter of a century before "The Naked Jungle" and "Them" flashed across your neighborhood movie screen, is now at work on "The Emmet Conspiracy," an etymological novel. Olsen, one of the early magazine science fiction idols, recently celebrated his seventieth birthday. And S. Fowler Wright (now 80) is writing "Under Ten," a novel which depicts the world depopulated of adults.

L. Sprague de Camp is still hard at work on his monumental "History of Science in America." This is, of course, not science fiction, but we feel certain that most s-f fans will find it of genuine interest. ... And Sam Moskowitz's "The Immortal Storm," 200,000 words of science fiction history, is now available from the Atlanta Science Fiction Organization Press, 713 Coventry Road, Decatur, Georgia, at \$5.00. The book contains numerous photos of science fiction notables of the past and present, and Frank R. Paul has done the dust wrapper.

News and Views: "Art Wesley," author of "Dropper" (*Universe*, May, '54) is multi-talented, active fan, Dean A. Grennell in disguise. ... Sam Moskowitz, now that *Science Fiction Plus* has gone the way of all pulp, edits a frozen fruit trade journal—and just one floor below his previous editorial offices! ... Robert Q. Lewis is an avid science fiction reader. (How did Tony Boucher let him off without a testimonial?). ... Science fiction is blossoming out all over department: Moscow radio announces that, of the seventy million adventure books being printed in 1954, the emphasis is on science fiction.

Super Sports for September, 1954; fea-

tured a baseball story of the 21st century, "Rockets On the Mound," by Jim Moore (pseudonym?). ... Joe Gibson and Jim Harmon, two fans who have been writing profusely of late, are appearing in the two Australian bi-monthlies. ... Sweden's *Hapna!* (*Be Astonished!*), which has been termed, "the world's best looking s-f magazine," will soon have Danish, Norwegian, and Finnish editions. ... And England's *Authentic Science Fiction* is the first foreign magazine to make an effort to capture the American market.

Budding authors, take heed! You may have heard that you almost invariably accumulate enough rejection slips to paper a wall before making that first sale. Not so with Hal Lynch of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society. Hal sold his first two attempts at fiction: "Artists At Work" (*Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, May, '52) and "Age of Retirement" (*Astounding*, April, '54). Hal is now working on his first novel.

Robert Bloch considers his many-times anthologized "Yours Truly—Jack the Ripper" one of his least worthy stories. You don't mind if we disagree, do you, Bob? Bloch, incidentally, supports science fiction fandom as no other professional writer ever has. He writes fan articles by the dozen, and comments on every fan magazine he reads. He is known as "the pro turned fan."

Who says politicians don't read? Alvin Wingfield, Jr., who was an unsuccessful candidate in the 1954 North Carolina Senatorial race, is an old-time s-f reader, and even had a letter in *Astounding's* readers' department away back in 1934. Wingfield has been asked to attend a future meeting of the Carolina S-F Society. Speaking of the North state, a group of the Carolina

boys have made arrangements to meet with members of the Atlanta Science Fiction Organization to map out plans for the first Southeastern Science Fiction Conference for 1955. Anyone interested in such a gathering is invited to contact the writer at the address listed at the end of this department.

This really happened! During the past war (in 1943, to be specific) we were stationed at Camp Sutton, North Carolina, assigned to the Public Relations Department. Also stationed there at the time was the 35th Special Services Company, which numbered among its noteworthy members one homespun Indiana comedian, Herb Shriner. One day we were discussing the type of men composing Herb's outfit, and we casually inquired if there were any s-f fans in the unit.

To which Herb replied, "Yes, a couple. But let me tell you about a guy I met in California...."

We interrupted with, "Was his name Forrie Ackerman?"

It was. Just one of those strange coincidences.

The Scientifilms: Walt Disney is preparing a series (TV) called "The World of Tomorrow." Willy Ley has been hired to assist him produce an episode based on a trip to Mars. Also coming up on TV will be a series by Ted Sturgeon, Alfred Bester, and James Blish. And Wernher Von Braun will be the technical expert for a forthcoming video program. ...Ivan Tors ("Magnetic Monster," "Riders to the Stars," and "Gog") has bought "Green-Out" by John Bennett, for filming. ..."Killers from Space" introduces the theme of utilization of atomic energy to replace our dwindling food supply. ...Robert Schrader, manager of the Visulite Theater in Charlotte, and Carolina S-F Society member, is planning a "science fiction film festival." If this venture proves successful, it would be a favorable point of information for other fan groups to present to local theater management. ..."Devil Woman from Mars" is a British offering. Place it in the same category as "Cat Women of the Moon."

THE FAN PRESS

ONE OF THE most startling aspects of the fanzine field is the incredibly large number of these amateur publications being issued at any one period of time. They are extremely ephemeral, most surviving for only about eight or ten issues. However, as one succumbs to the waning enthusiasm of its youthful instigator, another active fan presents his offering to the science fiction world. We would estimate that about fifty or sixty fanzines are being issued right now. Consequently, it is extremely difficult to review all (or even a majority) of them in a department of this nature. This time, in a token effort to alleviate this situation, we shall concentrate on fanzines which

have not been previously reviewed in "Inside S-F."

A publication from the deep south, which has improved vastly of late, is *SFazine* (10cts. from Samuel Johnson, 1517 Penny Drive, Elizabeth City, North Carolina). The current issue is well-mimeographed and contains a neatly balanced array of fiction, articles, and departments. We liked Wilkie Conner's "Sex, Satan, and Science Fiction" in which the science fiction reader of today is compared with the witches of old. The fiction by Carol McKinney and Terry Carr is average, and several short science articles on astronautics and flying saucers are well presented. This is not one of the top fanzines, but you certainly get your thin dime's worth of reading matter.

Strange indeed is the editorial policy of *Starlight* (sample obtainable for free from Charles Wilgus, 5425 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles 29, California, Apartment 205). The gratis distribution rate is unusual in itself, but *Starlight* also pays for material! Features of the current issue are a short biography (with photograph) of Alfred Bester, and a discerning view of the professional science fiction field by Henry Moskowitz. Incidentally, this one is photo-offset.

We mentioned above that most fanzines die youthful deaths. One of the exceptions to the rule is *Oops!* (15cts. from Gregg Calkins, 2817 Eleventh Street, Santa Monica, California). We have number 13 at hand, and it is beautifully mimeographed, highly articulate, and extremely interesting. Vernon McCain discusses what he considers last year's two best novels. ("Childhood's End" and "Baby Makes Three" by Clarke and Sturgeon, respectively.) Walter Willis, Scotland's gift to fandom, and one of the most prolific (and clever) of all fan writers (past, present, and, probably, future) lays down fandom's moral laws, and tells of his adventures at the 1952 Chicago Convention. There are other choice morsels, including a page of Terry Carr's incomparable "Face Critters." You'll like this one!

Another exception to the "ephemeral" statement of above is *Canadian Fandom* (20cts. from Gerald Stewart, 166 McRoberts Avenue, Toronto 10, Ontario, Canada). This one is now in its eleventh year of publication! And, after eleven years of experience, these boys know how to publish a fanzine! The mimeographing is 100% legible, the format is extremely neat, and the material is well-written. Howard Lyon's "Phi Alpha" is a column just oozing with news of the s-f world, and "S.H.M." discusses ancient fanzines, this time concentrating on one of the all-time greats, Harry Warner's *Spaceways*. Norman G. Browne defends Howard Browne (no—not relatives) and *Amazing*, and several other items round out a highly recommended issue.

Another West Coast fanzine of high calibre is *Vulcan* (15cts. from Terry Carr, 134

Cambridge Street, San Francisco 12, California). Russ Watkins has an informative gossip column, and Don Cantin pens a humorous piece inspired by Robert Bloch's novel, "The Scarf." J. T. Oliver's short story, "Fadeout," isn't bad at all—but it reads amazingly like "Dream's End," which was published in *Wonder Stories*, December, 1935. A long letter column appears. *Vulcan* is worth trying.

California's appears to have nearly a monopoly this time. Another West Coast emanation is *Fog* (only a nickel from Don Wegars, 2444 Valley Street, Berkeley 2, California). This one is reproduced via the Ditto process, and editor Wegars' end result is a highly commendable publication. Richard E. Geis (editor of *Psychotic*, one of today's best fanzines) and Ray Thompson pen informative news columns and Ron Ellik explains why British fandom is different from American fandom. (Our personal opinion is that British and American fandom are very much alike.) There is also a discerning fanzine review department and some wacky poetry. Dittoed in several colors, *Fog* is the best fanzine buy of the quarter.

All the way from Ireland comes *Hyphen* (25cts. for a sample from Walter A. Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast). Chock full of informative articles, saturated with whimsy, replete with interliniations, *Hyphen* is Europe's leading fanzine as its editor, Walt Willis, is Europe's leading fan. Issue #9 is devoted primarily to reports apropos the 1954 British S-F Convention,

held in Manchester, the "Supermancon." Willis and Vincent Clarke cover the affair vividly and intimately, and one concludes that British and American fandom have a great deal in common. In addition to several news columns, there are articles by Robert Bloch and Richard Geis, both composed in a somewhat humorous manner. We get a kick out of *Hyphen*, and we're sure you will, also.

What might be termed, "a prozine in mimeographed format," is *Dimensions* (20cts. from Harlan Ellison, 41 East 17th Avenue, Columbus 1, Ohio). Ellison slants his magazine at the outer-circle reader in that he presents a well-balanced contents composed of fiction, articles, columns, and book reviews. The new issue contains 68 large, well-mimeographed pages with a feature article by Fletcher Pratt in which he tells "The Inside Story of the Harold Shea Novels." The book field is comprehensively reviewed by Algis Budrys, Andre Norton, and Ellison, and David Ish covers the fanzine field. Charles W. Ryan and Marion Zimmer Bradley are represented with fiction of an almost-professional calibre, and there are numerous columns and articles by Joe Gibson, Dean A. Grennell, and other s-f luminaries. *Dimensions* is today's biggest fanzine.

All fanzines for review should be sent to: Robert A. Madle, 1620 Anderson Street, Charlotte, North Carolina.



"OUT OF THIS WORLD" says Daily News

If you read the New York Daily News for August 11, 1954, you might have noticed a full page devoted to science fiction magazines. And among the titles whose covers were reproduced was our own FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION!

A New Issue Will
Be On Sale Soon



As in former issues, we shall feature the finest authors, and their stories will be illustrated by the leading illustrators in the field.

Watch your newsstands for the *new, pocket-size*

FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION

Any Rwon who could prove to another of his own caste that he needed a possession of the latter, more than its present owner, was entitled to have it!

POSSESSION

by L. Sprague de Camp



PROFESSOR ERIC WADE lolled in his Tecumseh as the car, on automatic, dipped down the long slope into the Rock River Valley. Granite sand and pines gave way to limestone and farms. Here and there an early-turning maple gave a spot of red to the landscape. Wade swallowed to equalize the pressure on his eardrums; it was hot in the valley—though not hot enough to make Wade crank up his windows and turn on the air-conditioning.

Then, though still miles short of Clarksburg, Wade flipped the switch that put the car on manual, grasping the wheel as he did so. He slowed down to a mere thirty, looking about. Presently he turned off on a dirt road, where there was no buried controllable to operate the Tecumseh on automatic.

The road was a short-cut to Clarksburg, but so rough and winding—not to mention its lack of automatic control—that nobody used it except as a

means of reaching the houses that lay along it. Most of these houses were too far back to be seen from the road, their existence betrayed only by dirt or gravel driveways and mailboxes. As he neared one of these driveways, Wade slowed to a crawl and peered about. He did so with a slightly furtive air, as if Doris' jealous ghost were watching from the back seat. He smiled at his own guilt-reaction, thinking: *She always said if anything happened to her I should marry again soon; that I could never manage the house and kids without her. She was right, too.*

The Tecumseh crept past the driveway with the mailbox marked *Honeth* and speeded up. A last dip and it rumbled over the old bridge at Aquilon and purred up the slope on the other side of the Rock River. Wade continued to glance about.

A few minutes later the dirt short-cut rejoined the main road by which Wade had driven down from Lake Sca-

jadaga. He put the car back on automatic and rolled into Clarksburg.

Here he pulled up to a curb and got out. He reasoned that his knees were stiff from a two-hour drive, and moreover, having started from the Shapiros' right after an early breakfast, he had not yet seen a newspaper. But he still moved in that oddly furtive fashion and peered about, looking hard at passing autos.

Greene's Drug Store still flourished. Professor Wade went in, picked a paper off the rack, and sat down at the fountain. Old man Greene himself came behind the fountain. The soda-jerk had not yet showed up, as it was just after nine.

"A cnatsi," said Wade, glancing at old man Greene. The proprietor, it seemed to Wade, was a lot fatter and grayer than he remembered. But, he thought, others who had not seen him, Wade, for twelve years would say things like that about him—even though he had not grown a belly like Will Shapiro's. He put on his glasses and began reading the headlines and the weather-forecast.

"A cnatsi," said a voice with a curious tinny tamber.

Wade, knowing that accent, looked up. Of course it was a Rwon, partaking of the common drink of his planet. Cnatsi had made big inroads into the earth's consumption of tea and coffee, as its alkaloids provided a mild stimulation without affecting the heart, and it tasted good in its tart way.

The Rwon looked like all the others of his race: a five-foot humanoid, powerfully muscled against the gravity of Rwona, though the muscles never quite corresponded to those of a man. The face, though not human, was not unattractive when you got used to it. It reminded Wade of an Easter Island statue or an exceptionally brainy baboon. The naked putty-gray skin was shorn of its silvery pelt, for otherwise Rwns found Earth's temperate zone too hot to endure. There were no external in-

dications of sex, for the good reason that Rwns were sexless; they budded.

After a reciprocal glance, in which the red-irised eyes of the Rwon met Wade's, Wade returned to his drink and his paper. It would have been easy to exchange a word with the extra-terrestrial. Rwns were friendly and likeable, though their culture was very different from that of men. Not only were they sexless; they regarded human reproduction with horror and disgust. And their institution of property was without terran parallels; any Rwon who could prove to another of his own caste that he needed a possession of the latter, more than its present owner, was entitled to have it. Their social structure was entirely undemocratic.

WADE SUCKED on his straw. As a member of the Advisory Commission on Interplanetary Relationships, he worked on the Rwonan problem all the time; this was his vacation. Moreover, if he was little known among his fellow-earthmen outside the University, he was—as a commissioner—known to the Rwns. If he admitted his identity, the Rwon would talk his ear off, trying to influence him. And Eric Wade's mind, at the moment, was full of more personal matters.

He finished his cnatsi, paid, and returned to his car. A glance up and down the main street of Clarksburg showed no sign of *her*. He got back into the Tecumseh and purred off towards Carcosa.

Carcosa was a huge house, built by an ancestor of Eric Wade at the beginning of the twentieth century—which made it practically medieval. Despite its wooden construction it had survived the hazards of fire and of social and financial upheaval for over two centuries in the same family—not that its successive owners had not tried hard to sell it.

With the car on manual still, Eric Wade drove out Iroquois Street until

it turned into another country road, dipped down into the valley again, crossed the Rock River, and snaked along that turbulent stream for three miles. Then Wade turned into the driveway marked by the buggy-wide ivy-covered pylons. Carcosa came in sight amidst its dark towering ancient pines. With a nostalgic *frisson*, Wade recognized the towers and other architectural excrescences. They should, he thought, advertise: antique manor-house for sale. Hot and cold running ghosts; built-in bats and owls.

Then he was greeting his cousin Molly Kirkland. She had turned gray of hair since he saw her last, but was still plump and forceful. She kissed him loudly and introduced her son, a handsome lad in uniform just back from Lunar duty.

Wade's more distant cousin Christine was there to be kissed, too; she was the one who had never married. There was much well-well-well, you don't look any different, which of course was not true. Molly joshed Wade on his receding hairline. "Lots of time before lunch, Eric. Let's go look at the garden."

"Any nibbles on the property?"

"Yes, there's a man who's *sure* to buy any day..."

"Where's Aunt Betsy?"

"Didn't you know? She died three years ago. How's your brother?"

"He's in Africa..."

"We were so sorry about poor Doris... Where are your children, Eric? We expected them."

"I left them with the Shapiros. If I didn't get away from those three savages once in a while I'd go psycho. How are you making a living, Molly?"

"Oh, between Humphrey's insurance and a column in the Clarksburg *Press* I manage. Say, I've got to drive into town before lunch to shop. Like to come along and tote groceries?"

"Sure. Say, whatever became of..."

Eric Wade sat beside Molly Kirkland as the big old Kessler rolled back

towards Clarksburg. With surgical skill he probed for news of people whom he had known in these parts in his youth. True, there was only one in whom he was really interested. But he did not care to unmask his batteries so early by starting his questions with one about *her*.

HE SMILED at his own craft. *You are*, he thought, *a middle-ageing pedant on a cold-blooded, self-seeking wife-hunt. (Well, what's wrong with that? They don't have to take me if they don't want me.) You haven't been in love with Vida for thirteen years, even if the frustrations of the last year have caused a prettyfied memory-image of her to haunt your sleep. You'd stay a widower if the kids weren't too much for you...*

He asked: "What's happened to that oaf—you know—Bertram de Retske?"

"Trying to drink himself to death. It's got so nobody can invite him anywhere, because he always gets stinking and totally uninhibited with the ladies."

"I'm not surprised," said Wade.

"He has some excuse; his wife has become a Rwonist."

"Oh? Maybe she left him because of the kind of man he is."

"You could argue either way."

"How does Mrs. de Retske find the perfect husband?"

Molly shrugged. "I haven't seen her since. Say, Eric, aren't you on some international commission to do with the Rwons?"

"Yes. That's the kind of thing that makes it tough for us."

"How?"

"Well, you can't really blame the Rwons because they treat a woman better than any terran husband. Always kind and considerate and reliable; always appreciative of improvements in the house; always admiring the new hat or coiffure." Wade shot an appraising glance at his cousin, five

years his senior. "You could do worse yourself."

"Thanks, but if I have to put up with another man, I want a *man*."

Wade sighed. "You always were a lusty wench. Most women are glad to put up with a Rwon's shortcomings for the other benefits."

"Besides," said Molly Kirkland, "I don't care to be anybody's possession—anybody's slave."

"Oh, that's nominal, and purely voluntary as far as earthwomen are concerned. They have this caste-system in which everybody's the property of a member of a higher caste. But it's a mild form of slavery; you can't make your 'property' work for you."

"How do they cause your commission trouble?"

"Well," said Wade, wiping his high forehead (for the Kessler's air-conditioner had long since given up its mechanical ghost), "you can see how a man like Bert de Retske would feel. He's just an ordinary human being with the usual lusts and vices, and bad temper, and his wife deserts him for an extra-terrestrial monkey. Even though it's not living in sin, he feels he's the victim of unfair competition, and wants us to erect a marital tariff-wall around the earth. On the other hand, though the Rwons have some odd customs, they're peaceable and friendly and have clever ideas we can use. So we don't want to antagonize them, see?"

"I see."

"By the way, what's become of my old girl-friend, Vida Honeth?" said Wade, his heart pounding despite his ostentatious nonchalance.

"What we've been talking about."

"Huh?"

"She's become a Rwonist too."

"O-oh!" said Wade, staring at the instrument-panel. He felt as if a stick of plutonium had just gone off in his viscera, but kept his voice steady. He also felt a sneaking sympathy for the disreputable de Retske. "I ran into her

uncle last year at a conference on extra-terrestrial relations, and he told me she hadn't married."

"That's why, though her family doesn't like to talk about it... What are you staring around like that for? Hoping for a glimpse of Vida?"

Damn, thought Wade. He should have remembered his cousin's shrewdness. With an effort he refrained from peering about the streets of Clarksburg. Molly continued: "It's a waste of time anyway."

"You mean she's not living in the house at Aquilon?"

"Oh, she's there. But she has the house to herself because none of her family will come while *it* is there—"

"A prejudiced attitude," interrupted Wade, "but dog my cats if I don't see their point of view."

"As I was saying, she doesn't come into Clarksburg because she feels the people here look on her as the victim of some horrible vice. *It* drives in and does the marketing instead."

"Hmm. Is this the only Rwon in the county?"

"The only one I know of."

"Then it must be the one I saw in Greene's this morning. Oh, well, it doesn't matter," said Wade with forced levity as Molly parked. "I refuse to cope with the Rwonan problem on my own time."

Molly shot him a glance of irony and got out to shop.

THREE HOURS later, Eric Wade was driving back towards Lake Scadjadaga to pick up his three savages. He expected to find Will Shapiro and his wife somewhat limp from their experience, but Will had asked for it.

The matter of Vida Honeth continued to churn his thoughts. His first reaction had been that he had lost all interest in her; she might as well have died. However, with the passage of time, the image of the small dark girl began to edge back into his consciousness for all he wished to shut her out.

(Girl? She was three years younger than he, which would make her thirty-six or seven. Say "woman.")

Rolling out of Clarksburg, he shifted the Tecumseh into automatic as he reached the state highway. A moment later he shifted back into manual and whirled the car, tires squealing, on to the dirt road that ran past the hamlet of Aquilon. He told himself that he was merely saving a couple of miles, but he knew this to be a singularly transparent excuse.

Five minutes later Wade slowed down for the Honeth driveway. He was aware of a curious pressure within himself, as if conflicting emotions had caused the blood in his skull to boil. He struck the steering-wheel with his fist.

The leading emotion of which he was aware was a burning curiosity. He *must* look into this matter. If he did not, he would probably never see Vida Honeth again and never know just what was going on and how he, himself, really felt. And then there was a twinge of chauvinistic planetary jealousy. A human husband, even one of another race or nation, he could have wished well to; but for her to take up with a Rwon seemed like a waste of good womanhood.

The car nosed into the driveway and crept up the long hill and around the bend, flanked by trees, to the house. This was a field-stone farmhouse built in 1998 and remodelled in 2035.

He rang the door-bell. The emotions might still churn within, but the suave facade was now that of Dr. Eric Wade, Professor of Political Science and counsellor to the great of the earth.

As the day was very hot for September, the entrance was barred by the screen-door only. Wade had a glimpse of a small person in jeans, with a kind of turban around her head. As his eyes adjusted to the light of the interior, it seemed to him that Vida did not look a day older than the last time he had seen her, thirteen years before. (*May-*

be the screen has a softening effect, he thought.)

Then came the words: "Why, Eric! For heaven's sake! Come in, but why didn't you 'phone so as not to catch me in the middle of housecleaning?"

He shook her small firm hand and was led in. As he stood in the archway opening into the living-room, a sound from the rear came to his ears. In came the Rwon he had seen in Greene's that morning. Vida said: "Eric, this is my friend, Zdaor. Dear, this is Professor Eric Wade. Maybe you've heard of him?"

"I have indeed," said the tinny voice; "it is a great pleasure."

The clawed hand, something like a bird's foot, came smoothly out to grasp Wade's hand. Vida said: "You two wait here while I go to make myself look human. Zdaor, get Dr. Wade a drink. He's an old friend."

Zdaor said: "What would you like, Profethor? Scotch? Rye..."

WADE OPTED for rye-on-rocks.

While waiting he prowled around looking at books and magazines. He had the habit of many intellectuals of minutely inspecting the books of every new house he entered, as if he could thereby gain an insight into the owner's personality. Most of these books were in a Rwonan language, written with a signary of dots and bars. Wade could make out only an occasional word. His ears made him aware of the return of the Rwon with refreshments.

"I must brush up on my languages," he said with an insincere smile. "I tried Enyau once, but all those prefixes and affixes and suffixes and infixes defeated me."

Zdaor spread a hand in a shrugging gesture, though a genuine shrug was impossible to it because its arms were firmly jointed to its skeleton instead of being loosely hung in muscle like those of a terran mammal. "It is no worse than some of your terran tongues. I do not sink any of our lan-

guages are so highly inflected as the Bantu tongues, or have so many rules as Arabic, or such irregular spelling as your own English. But before talking let us drink. *Ceswo* to interplanetary friendship!"

"*Ceswo*. That's good!"

"It is hot, thir. And our conditioner is in Clarksburg undergoing repairs. But tell me, Professor Wade, are you not a member of the Advisory Commission on Interplanetary Relationships?"

"That's right."

"Ah." The Rwon smiled (an artificial gesture, as the true Rwonan smile was performed by twitching the ears). "What will your distinguished Commission advise the Assembly about the new bill to regulate the residence of Rwons on earth?"

Here we go again, thought Wade. "We haven't completed our report yet. And you know terran politicians; they may ignore it. Have you any suggestions?"

"Oh, yes, if I may present them wissout boring you. In the first place, we contend..."

The argument was fluent, cogent, and delivered with charming adroitness. The only trouble was that Wade had heard it all before in the course of his work on the Commission. He was glad when Vida came back in a proper dress and hair-do. She was still a damned pretty woman, thought Wade, though now he could see hints of age, such as gray hairs among the black.

"Oh, Zdaor!" she said. "Eric's heard all that. I want to talk about him. I was sorry to hear about your wife, Eric; you have children, haven't you?"

"Three little monsters."

"What a thing to say! What are they like?"

"The older boy's a muscular, extraverted young hellion; the younger's a maladjusted genius who has to do everything differently from everybody else. As for the little girl..."

For a while the talk ran upon such personalia: relatives, friends, jobs, money, personal adventures and accomplishments. Then, subtly, Zdaor brought the talk back to human-Rwonan relationships. Vida kept refilling the glasses before Wade had a chance to half-empty his.

ERIC WADE'S tensions relaxed. The room swam gently. If he could only stop this damned dull argument about the rights of wrongs—he meant the rights of Rwons—things would be perfect. Somewhere along the line he resolved not to drink any more, because he was going to have to drive on manual. But that resolution got mislaid along with his recollection of the phenomenal drinking-capacity of Rwons.

"...but," Zdaor was saying, "you admit we do no harm. We abide by your terran laws and do not upthet your economic systems. Why, then, all these hostile new restrictions? Anybody would sink—"

"I'll tell you!" shouted Wade, banging the wooden arm of the ancient Morris-chair. The only way to stop this individual would be to give it the unpalatable truth. Wade realized that he was shouting and repeated in a lower tone: "I'll tell you, Zdaor old pal." With effort he focussed on the gray baboon-like face. "You're an example yourself."

"How can that be? I take care to offend no one—"

"Look. Itsh—it's like this. You know, my wife died last year. Damn fine wife. We didn't always get along, but that was as much my fault as hers."

"I do not see the connection."

"Well, she left me with three kids. Prob'ly grow up to be good citizens, but meantime they drive me nuts. Utterly, absolutely, indubitably psychotic. Never was much good at handling them."

"I still do not thee—"

"Tried getting housekeepers, or



boarding 'em out with relatives. Nothing works. My damned brother's in Africa, frinstance, and housekeepers are all thieves or incompetents. What's the answer? Get a new wife. Eligible widower, good salary. Shouldn't have trouble. What do I do? Start looking up all my old girl-friends of fifteen-twenty years ago. Look up Vida here. What do I find? You tell me, Zdaor old pal."

"Ah, I see. But, my friend, why blame me? If she had not come into my possession, she would probably have married another earthman and be just as inaccessible."

"And maybe not. How long you two been—uh—going together?"

"Four years last May," said Vida. "Eric, can't we talk about something less embarrassing?"

Wade ignored the last request and said with owlsh solemnity to Zdaor: "See? Told you."

"Told me what? I do not understand—"

"Damn it, you don't want to see!" cried Wade in a passion. "How many of you are on earth? Fourteen thousand? No, skipped a decimal; hundred and forty thousand. More coming every year."

"Well?"

"At least a hundred and thirty thousand of 'em have got terran women living with 'em. Living in non-sin, you might say. Where does that leave us terran males? We can't compete with you in charm and virtue—"

"Why don't you go for a walk, Eric?" said Vida. "You'll feel better. We have a fine garden."

"I've smelled my quota of flowers for the day, thanks. Now, you listen here, Zdaor—"

The Rwon said: "But we are such a small fraction of your population—what is it? Three billion?"

"Nevertheless and notwithstanding, every man who can't find a proper mate shub-subconsciously blames it on you, and says why should that goddam monkey—"

"Please, Dr. Wade. We try to adapt ourselves, but one sing we do *not* like is to be called monkeys."

"If you don't like it, you know where you can go. Right back—"

Zdaor rose. "It has been very interesting, Professor. You must excuse me, for I have work—"

"Oh, no you don't! Jush when—"

"Please Eric, you're making a fool of yourself," said Vida. "If you can't be pleasant, you'd better—"

Wade heaved himself out of his chair. "Not till I've finished telling this monkey—"

Splush!

Wiping his stinging, streaming eyes, Eric Wade was vaguely aware that the Rwon had thrown the remains of a glass of rye-and-ice in his face. When he could see again he took a staggering step towards a blur he identified as Zdaor. He cocked his fist.

Then the light went out.

AS CONSCIOUSNESS returned to Eric Wade, he became aware that he was lying on his back on the sofa in the Honeth house. The thing that had aroused him was a yellow ray of the evening sun, shining slantwise across the room on his face. His belt had been loosened and his shoes removed. He had a headache, a foul taste in his mouth, and a burning thirst.

But his physical discomfort was nothing compared to the spiritual agony that settled upon him as, with horrible clarity, he remembered his drunken conversation with and attack

upon Zdaor. What in the name of all the gods had possessed him? He had not made such an obnoxious ass of himself since he was an undergraduate, twenty-odd years before. He, Eric Wade, *never* got drunk and insulted people as did louts like Bertram de Retske. His career would be ruined if this got out. And these people had only been kind and courteous to him.

What was wrong with him? Of course there was the heat, and his state of emotional upset, and Vida's habit of pouring a little into your glass when you weren't looking. But nothing could atone for this horrible gaffe...

His head began to clear and the throbbing to abate. As he lay wondering whether he should try to slink out without exposing those in the house to his defiling presence, Vida came in.

"Awake?" she said.

"Guess so." Wade swallowed with effort. "What happened?"

"Zdaor pushed you, and you fell and hit your head on the arm of the chair. We had Dr. Federico in, and he said you'd be all right when you came out of your drunken stupor."

Wade felt his scalp and located the goose-egg. "Where's it? I mean Zdaor? I've got to apologize..."

"He's packed up and gone."

"Gone?" said Wade stupidly.

"Yes."

"You mean it was so insulted that..."

"No, it wasn't that. First he was terrified of trouble with us 'natives,' but the doctor reassured him."

"What then?" said Wade, wincing at a throb.

"You know their system of property?"

"Yes."

"Well, you proved to Zdaor that you needed me more than he did, so under their custom he had to give me to you. If it had just been love—or what they call 'that strange terran glandular madness'—he wouldn't have been influenced. But when you showed him you

needed somebody to keep your house and children, you had him."

"Oh." Wade became aware that Vida was holding a carving-knife. His eyes widened. He pushed back against the wall, away from the bright blade. *No doubt, he thought, she will now disembowel me for driving away her ideal husband...*

SHE TOOK a step towards him.

"Vidal!" he croaked. "Don't ruin your life! That won't help any..."

She stopped. "What's the matter?"

"Aren't you going to stab me?"

"Good heavens, no! What made you think such a thing?"

"Well—I thought—with Zdaor gone..."

She burst into laughter. She laughed until she had to sit down, and finally said: "You poor idiot, I won't miss him; and it's not a question of sex, either. He had his virtues, but you have no idea what a dull bore it gets, living with an ideal person. Now you have faults, but—"

"Me?"

"Well, didn't you mean what you told Zdaor?"

"Of course I did. But after that exhibition..."

"That's all right. The reason I always turned down your proposals in the old days was you were such a stiff little prig, never drinking or—anything. Now... Of course I won't be rushed into anything."

"It'll work out, darling," said Wade, swinging his feet down from the sofa and reaching for his shoes. "But what was the knife for?"

"I was going to ask you, if you were conscious, how you liked your steak."

"Real cow-steak?"

"Yes."

"Rare," said Eric Wade. "Better yet, let me cook it. I can do a couple of things Rwns can't, and one of them is to broil a steak right." He tied his shoes, rose, and followed Vida into the kitchen.

A long-suffering reader offers a few suggestions on a theme we're all interested in discussing. Arguments from all of you are cordially invited!

Perfection Is No Trifle

Special feature by Jay Tyler



AS ONE of innumerable long time followers of science fiction, from the day I first opened a copy of Jules Verne's "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea" and thence to a copy of *Astounding Stories, of Super Science*

which featured a serial entitled "The Pirate Planet," I've bent as many ears as possible and listened to as much myself on the far-from-new subject of "What's Wrong With Science Fiction?"

First of all, let's agree that there's nothing basically wrong with the medium itself; and second, let's agree for the sake of this discussion that there's no single easy answer—no solitary priceless ingredient which, could the willing author merely grasp it, would ensure that his work thereafter would be all of the highest quality. I want to discuss one aspect that seems to me to be important, and which I haven't seen kicked around very much in discussions and articles.

L. Sprague de Camp touched on it in his "Science Fiction Handbook", on page 189, where he mentions an asser-

tion by Bernard De Voto that "the absolute essential for successful fiction-writing was neither profound erudition, nor painstaking research, nor warm human sympathy, nor technical writing skill, useful though all these qualities be." What, then, is this essential? It is "the ability to visualize one's characters, setting, and events so vividly and intensely that the reader was forced to share in this act of imagination."

Now since what I want to talk about is not merely "successful" science fiction (or any other kind of fiction) but *meaningfully successful* science fiction this hint of Mr. De Voto's tells just part of my story. When I say, "meaningfully successful" science fiction as opposed to "merely successful" science fiction, I'll point to an example of each rather than try to give an abstract definition. I shall pick, that is, one story which many persons (thought not necessarily everyone who read the story) have agreed deserves such a label, in each instance.

Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" deals with a theme (the perfectibility of human society) about which people have speculated in various forms for just about as long as we

can find records of civilized society. The theme itself stimulates thought, and his treatment of it—utopia achieved through mechanization and psycho-control and environmental control and conditioning, etc.—deals with elements in our civilization which were not only present at the time he wrote the story, but which are likely to remain with us for an indefinite period to come in human history. There is a very good chance that anyone reading this novel for the first time is going to find himself thinking of matters he has not thought of before, and perhaps in a somewhat different way than before; there is also a very good chance that the same person, rereading the story some years later, will receive new impressions not obtained the first time. Some of these may be older impressions, tied in with his life-experience between the first and second readings, which appear in a different light, stimulating re-examinations of earlier impressions.

Jack Williamson's "Legion of Space" struck me, as it did many others, as a vivid, fast-moving adventure story. For those readers to whom it was an introduction to science fiction (and to many who were dyed in the wool fans before) it offered new sensations and perhaps material for pleasant daydreams. I reread it later and enjoyed it for a second time—again, as did many others. But I doubt that this novel made any of its readers think or feel any differently than they had before they read the story. Yet, for those who acclaimed it, "Legion of Space" did contain that basic ingredient De Voto speaks of—the vividness and intensity that enthalls the reader and holds him to the last sentence.

IN THE meaningfully successful story, we have a residue of stimulation—mental-emotional provocation—which can be carried over into experience, which in itself constitutes experience.



In the merely successful story, we have a residue of sensation—little more than physical excitement—which may or may not be renewed upon rereading the story, or recalling it to mind at leisure, but nothing more.

Is this to imply that "sensation" has no part in what we would call the higher type of these two? By no means. Vicarious physical excitement—sensation through vivid and intense characterization, setting, and event is one of the things that make the difference between a story and an essay. Many of the early utopian classics—and in this case we can define "classic" pretty much as something enshrined in literature, and talked about, but hardly ever read except by scholars—were little more than essays. "Looking Backward" was a "sensation" in its day, but the sensation came sheerly through low grade, intellectual titillation; Bellamy fed his readers predigested snippets of Karl Marx and others in what, to a present-day reader, is an endless travogue strung together with lectures

and exhortation. It's not only naive but hopelessly outdated now.

On the other hand, H. G. Wells' "When the Sleeper Wakes", while outdated enough to be quaint in many respects, presents a theme which is stimulating in itself, a story-line that has direction, characterization that is valid (given the setting and situation and limited knowledge of the future, as of the late '90s) so that the story will hold a reader of 1955—once he accepts the tale for what it is—and leave him with a considerable residue of experience. For what Wells said (a good deal of it that is) still has meaning enough to us to stimulate thought and reexamination of the present day world.

That a large percentage of today's output in the field is "merely successful" science fiction, is something about which I see no reason for complaint. This percentage in science fiction is no higher than in any other type of fiction; it performs much the same function. It achieves what it sets out to achieve without pretense, and almost anyone wants to relax now and then with a story which is just a "good story" and nothing more—whether it be of the science fiction variety, murder mystery, adventure, romance, historical, historical tragical, pastoral, sex pastoral, or sex historical tragical, etc.

But more writers than ever before, seem to be trying to write "meaningfully successful" science fiction and it is here where the difficulties start. Why do so many attempts fail? Why do we see so many stories which start out as if the author were trying to say something wind up as "merely successful"—where they do not fail altogether?

I think to a very large extent they fail in details, what the authors might consider trifles, where they have not taken care (or have lacked the ability) to "visualize one's characters, setting and events so vividly and intensely that the reader was forced to share in this act of imagination."

SCIENCE FICTION deals with events and situations which have not happened yet, and which could not happen now—"now" being the time when the story was written. To say that anything is permissible is to exaggerate, but not to give a false impression; let us say at least that an indefinite number of possibilities are open to the science-fiction author, and the reader will go along with him, *providing the author justifies his premises.*

What constitute the authors' premises? His characters, his setting and his events.

His characters have to be believable, in addition to requirements for ordinary fiction, in that they are informed by the same *types* of motivations that have spurred human behaviour throughout recorded human history. Love, hate, desire, ambition, greed, fear, etc., can be found in fiction as far back as fiction goes; we expect to find it in science fiction. But the precise manner of expression and the circumstances that spur forth these emotions—changes from era to era. In order to be credible, a character's motivations must be expressed in a manner appropriate to general behaviour of the times in which the story takes place.

This means that considerable pains must be taken with the setting, the background of the story, in order that the reader can be satisfied (a) that the situation in question *would* bring forth the response which a character gives it, and (b) that the response is appropriate *to this environment*, however inappropriate otherwise, for the sake of the story.

In "The Space Merchants", for example, the authors carefully detailed the environment of Courtenay their leading character—who can be described as a super-huckster. He's a familiar kind of person, and in this civilization he is "normal". He's entirely bound up with the advancement of Courtenay, and is capable of loving

only in relation to himself and his views and desires. Yet, at the end of the story, the reader is asked to believe that Courtenay has become a self-less idealist.

His response to events has been consistent up to this point; in fact, even a momentary delusion of idealism can be accepted, as circumstances have forced him to "love" his former enemies in relation to himself. But a complete change of character, as implied at the end, is completely inappropriate. Courtenay might continue under an illusion of having changed his ways completely, but he'd still continue to behave as he had before, distorting his motives and rationalizing his actions to fit his new picture of himself.

In fact, the most appropriate response for him to have made, under the circumstances, would have been a *simulated* reform (deceit is a survival characteristic in the hucksters' utopia) which the readers (but not necessarily others in the story) and Courtenay himself would know was a phoney.

The background and setting of a story must be detailed enough so that the reader can appreciate both the differences from and the similarities to the present day. If the story deals with Martian colonists, then we need to see what familiar aspects of living (as of 1955ff, Earth) are present; what are modified and in what ways, and what are missing—as well as inventions new to us. And these will set up the basis for characters' motivations and the way these are expressed, so that while they will be understandable to the reader they won't be merely the here-and-now projected onto Mars, with a few gadgets pasted here and there to make it Martian.

The "merely successful" science fiction stories usually have a clever plot, interesting characters and situations and events, and they carry the reader from beginning to end—but, really, it's just a skillful diversion. It's all cardboard and card tricks, but when done



well, we don't mind; we just went along for the ride, and hooray for Kim Kinison.

The "meaningfully successful" science fiction story presents a different world in detail so that we can see how just about every aspect of living—as we know it—goes there, or doesn't; only then can we believe the characters are as the authors say they are, and find their behaviour credible. And only with an infinite patience for such trifles can an author of science fiction give the reader experience in the sense that "mature" works outside of science fiction offer and justify the events and situations the author wants to portray.

Such trifles won't make a masterpiece by themselves; but I do not believe you'll find a masterpiece which does not have them.

If a giant were really clever, he'd
never show himself ...



For Drook, painting seemed to be most therapeutic.

GIANT IN THE FOREST

by Frank Belknap Long

illustrated by Hulsey

CLARICE said, "Peter, I feel so sorry for that poor little Martian in Ward C. You don't know what it means to be a telepath, and have to brood over the pain and shock in other minds."

She shook down a thermometer and placed it in a sterile metal case, her eyes pleading. "Couldn't you take a slight risk, and certify him as healed? He wants so desperately to go to the stars again."

"He was in a bad accident," I said. "The broken bones have to knit—"

Her eyes grew accusing. "He's almost healed... I'm sure of it. Why do you have to be such a perfectionist?"

I looked at my darling, serene and beautiful in her blue nurse's uniform, and pictured her sitting in candlelight in a smoky old restaurant, her hand tight in mine while I whispered into her ear.

That aspect of her wasn't quite in harmony with the cold gray walls of the hospital room, but it warmed the inner man.

"Ulno Drook has a first-rate mind

and he's bound to get all kinds of honors," I said. "When you get to feeling sorry for him, just remember that the Third Martian Treaty guarantees Martians full equality with us in all scientific pursuits."

I patted her shoulder. "That's all that matters—to feel a sense of unity in achievement, to know you're respected as an equal. Martian bones are more brittle than ours and take longer to mend. And Drook's a telepath, sure; he's wide open to pain and grief when he's in close proximity to humans. But nature's inequalities are trivial in themselves. Drook can take it like the brave little guy he is."

"Well—at least go downstairs and have another talk with him," my darling urged. "He worships you, Peter."

"Does he now?"

"He really does, Peter."

I smiled at her and gave her arm a squeeze. "Tonight at eight," I said. "See you then."

The warmth, the glow was momentary. I walked out into the corridor with a stethoscope draped around my neck, a man in the image of a living human being, but feeling more like a mummy from an ancient Peruvian salt mine. We work around the clock at *Explorers' Aid*, but sometimes we run out of time and have to manufacture a little on the quiet.

I found Drook in Ward C, sitting before an easel with a slender paintbrush in his hand. To keep his mind off his troubles the recreational director had taught him to paint like Gauguin.

Gauguin, it seems, was a painter who'd made quite a splash on Earth four centuries ago. Strong and proud and confident, Gauguin had painted women in barbaric costumes on long, golden afternoons, his palette aflame with hot jungle colors.

Getting the bodies of the Earth women right had been a little difficult for Drook because they didn't inspire in him any frenzies of delight. He'd

simply imagined Earth women as they must have looked to Gauguin and painted them unabashed.

"Splendid, Ulno Drook!" I said. "You're making real progress."

He swung about, his big gray ears flapping and his gnome-face breaking into a smile. "You like it, Peter?"

"I like *her*," I said. "How did you ever learn to paint like that?"

"Anything Gauguin could do, I can do better," Drook said. "He had a great natural gift for creation, but he did not know how to make a human woman attractive to more than this type of man or that type of man. You have to be a telepath to widen the appeal."

His big ears drooped and a spasm of pain crossed the gnome-features. "Someone is suffering in the next ward," he said. "An accident case. Peter, I'm well enough to leave."

He shivered and gripped my wrist with his skinny fingers, his eyes imploring. "Take me out of here, Peter!"

Before I could reply the communicator-globe lighted up, and a voice said: "Calling Dr. Jarvan. Dr. Jarvan, come to Ward E immediately please. That is all."

Drook released my wrist, and I could tell by his expression that he had conquered his fear, and had something important to tell me. But all he said was: "Your brother is back from the stars, Peter."

Not how badly Seaton had been hurt, or even whether I could count on finding him alive. Drook pretended not to know, and I had to get the details from the nurse by phone on my way upstairs.

IT WASN'T too bad. Seaton was still conscious and he had sent for me himself.

Seaton had come back alive from the stars.

The walk to the stars was tremendous. It was a brief walk, and your feet hardly moved at all. One minute

you'd be with friends, warm and secure and very sure of yourself. Saying goodbye to a dark-eyed girl perhaps, or holding in your arms a rather pathetic little figure wishing you luck.

The next you'd be collapsing into nothingness, your body and mind and hopes of eternity transferred from one vibrating metal disk to another vibrating metal disk across tens of thousands of light years. One step forward into the teleport; for an instant brief as a dropped heartbeat you ceased to be a man with the blood warm in your veins, and became a swirl of antigravitics in the chill gulfs between the stars.

It was not always a safe walk; despite every safety-device which human genius could devise, accidents happened. Sometimes the transmission field blanked out, a gap formed, and human blood and bone ran like quicksilver into light-millennia beyond the reach of human colonization. Sometimes the scanning mechanism failed, and an explorer emerged from a teleport shattered in body and mind. And for a few, the walk was over before it began.

My brother Seaton was one of the lucky ones. A shouting, disheveled Goliath he was, six feet five in his stockings, and he'd come back wild-eyed and delirious and wiping blood from his mouth. On the strength of his injuries they'd put him to bed, and given him a pretty, red-haired nurse; they'd swabbed a space for needles, and then, at his own request, they'd sent for me.

As I strode along I thought back to when the first explorer went out into space and the first physician had been born to look after him. I'd never fired a gun, and all of my adventures came to me second-hand. But every time the dawn came up I counted myself the luckiest lad alive.

I wondered if Seaton would calm down when he saw me. I shut my eyes and pictured him walking through

an unexplored wilderness where the Milky Way dimmed to a thin sprinkling of stars. Strange, vermillion-crested birds flaunted their plumage from every thicket, and rippling flashes of sunlight played over his tousled head and broad, straight shoulders.

Surely to explore a new world was to be a god! I thought of the men who had gone first in ships, traveling at many times the speed of light and letting fall from the blurring rim of overdrive the teleports which now dotted the planets of a thousand suns.

I thought of them and pitied them. They had paved the way and their rewards had been great. But surely to go alone was to know a far greater intoxication. It was the old primeval human dream recaptured in an age of scientific fulfillment. One lone man against the stars, pitting his intelligence and naked strength against the mystery and terror of the universe.

Its beauty too. Its terrible beauty that could wean a man from tiled fields and orchard hillsides, and make him dream of vast jungles, star-girded, tumbling into night a thousand light years from Sol.

The hospital room smelled faintly of antiseptics. I entered and shut the door quietly, knowing full well that a man could come back from the stars feeling as strong as an ox, and be dead in twenty minutes from parathyroid shock.

The red-haired nurse, who might have been the twin of a girl Seaton had been carrying the torch for a month before, turned quickly when she heard my footsteps on the tiled floor. The room was lighted by a warm glow from the wall panels, and her hair flamed as she turned; for an instant I found myself envying Seaton, without quite understanding why.

Seaton was sitting up straight, and when he saw me he let out a great shout. "Peter, lad, come here and let me look at you!"

I went over to him, nodding at

the nurse who was trying to look professional, and gave him a gentle poke in the ribs. I grinned, and did my best to make him think he'd be out of bed in an hour.

My brother Seaton. Thick black hair he had, almost as coarse as a wolf's pelt; his eyes were dark and piercing, and nothing you could say to him could tame him when he wanted to behave like a wildman.

You'd never think he was a gentle scholar who could reel off the weight of every known element, determine a spectrum line to within one five-millionth of an inch, and outsmart me in a game of chess.

"You came through raving," I said.

He laughed. "I'm as fit as a fiddle now, Peter. It was just the scanners. They jolted me up like a thousand wild horses shooting sparks from their manes."

"I'm checking you over anyway," I said. "Open your shirt."

I was pressing the stethoscope to his chest when he said in a low, earnest whisper: "Peter, lad, how would you like to go where you'd be free to help people in a really big way?"

HE TOLD me then about the world he'd just left. Callix Six was an Earthlike planet inhabited by a fair-skinned race of humans who did not differ from us in any way.

A stricken race, desperately in need of medical aid. A great and consuming weariness had come upon them, and they went about their tasks with a groping uncertainty, and sank down exhausted in the doorways of their homes long before the setting of the sun.

"Peter, I want to tell you about them. You know there have been periods in human history when everything ugly seems to vanish like a bad dream. Take the Homeric world, for instance. We think of it as half-mythical, bathed in a light that never was on sea or land. Actually there must have been

a period in the development of ancient Greece when conditions were very much as Homer described them.

"The great golden city-states already existed in embryo, so to speak, and the Greeks had been freed from the harshness and cruelty of barbarism. But they had not yet taken on the crushing burdens of civilization.

"Can't you just picture it, Peter? Shepherds piping their flocks home on purple hills and women with water jugs on their heads wending their way toward white stone cottages, and the lost Ulysses coming in over the wine-dark sea, his crew bursting into song. There must have been many Ulysseses, many Penelopes to welcome the wanderers home from the sea.

"Peter, these people are like that. I couldn't speak their language, but it was as though I had known them for all the years of my life. When you make friends you can't desert them, Peter."

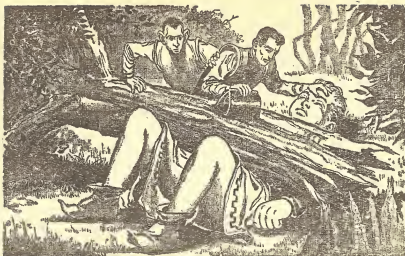
"You're strong enough to write out your report," I said. "Perhaps you'd better get started."

He shook his head stubbornly. Then his lips tightened and he looked at me steadily for an instant and spoke with a pleading urgency. "Peter, you can't even begin to understand how beautiful their culture is. To see it disappear—"

It was a new experience for me, walking along a silent corridor with just a little square medical case and the clothes on my back. You can teleport a laboratory to the stars, and a physician without all the equipment he's likely to need is at a great practical disadvantage.

At my side walked Ulno Drook. I was asking for it with a vengeance, but I did need a telepath and Drook had put up a very convincing argument. I'd be along to look after him, wouldn't I?

For the first time in my life I was stepping out of character and betraying a trust. When you take your life



This, then, must be the mysteriously missing giant.

oath you give your promise to use your authority with calm maturity.

The walk to the stars was tremendous, but a physician had no right to take it.

Approaching the teleport I could hear Seaton saying: "When you make friends it's hard to desert them, Peter lad."

He knew I was a pushover for that kind of talk. I had a healthy respect for explorers who refused to become bleeding hearts, but I did happen to be a physician. You take your oath and you can't quite forget that your job is to heal.

The teleport seemed to wink at us in chill mockery.

"Wait three minutes before you step in after me, Drook," I said.

"I'll be careful, Peter."

I squared my shoulders and braced myself against the terrible hammer-blow to the solar plexus which the scanners delivered before they blacked you out.

Then— I stepped forward into a roaring sea of light...

THE HOUSES were beautiful beyond belief. Thirty or forty one-story houses, shining crystal bright in garish sunlight, each dwelling sur-

rounded by thickets, and winding rustic paths and gardens bright with blue and vermillion flowers.

The teleport lay behind us on a russet hillside, its entrance choked with creeping vines. I'd emerged by pushing the vines aside and crawling out with scant regard for my dignity. Drook had scrambled out after me, and we'd descended the hill together.

There didn't seem to be any people about.

I turned to Drook and asked him if he could pick up any human thoughts.

He shook his head. "Not a thing, Peter!"

"The village can't be deserted," I protested. "Seaton left less than three hours ago."

"It doesn't take long to abandon a village," Drook said.

I vaguely sensed that he was disturbed, and I couldn't help noticing that the scene before us seemed to lay a spell on him, heightening his gnomish aspect and diminishing his talkativeness. I found it necessary to remind myself that the qualities which made an explorer great couldn't be learned in schoolrooms.

Drook knew how to adjust quickly to the baffling aspects of a new world,

to blend with its strangeness and beauty chameleon-fashion until it yielded up its inmost secrets. "The houses are transparent, Peter," he said. "If we were closer we could look inside and see the people."

"But you just said—"

"You asked me if I could pick up any random thoughts, Peter." Drook's voice was calm and precise. "There are people in all of the houses, but they are either asleep or dead; sometimes it's hard to tell."

People in all of the houses.

People asleep or dead.

The village was less than three hundred feet away, and I headed toward it on the run. Drook's words had come as a shock and filled me with an ominous foreboding. But what I saw as the individual dwellings ceased to glimmer and became blocks of completely transparent crystal was so startlingly beautiful that I experienced for an instant no sense of tragedy.

Then it hit me.

Clad in white and flowing robes which seemed to blend with their graceful limbs they sat about like exquisitely beautiful statues in a museum. We went from house to house and what we saw filled us with a pity so great we could only stare and shake our heads.

The people were not dead. I took their pulses, and their hearts were beating steadily. But they had all fallen into a deep sleep, the sleep of utter exhaustion.

In one house there was a baby sitting upright in a wooden cradle. He was gripping a wooden spoon and making faces in his sleep. Shaking failed to rouse him.

There was a woman so beautiful she brought a catch to my throat. There was an old man who looked like Socrates slumped above a butter-churn, his long beard descending to his chest. There was a pair of young lovers, holding hands,

Apparently they had gone to sleep starry-eyed together.

EACH HOUSE was furnished with great simplicity and beauty. There were three-legged chairs and tables carved of some dark resinous wood that filled the rooms with a forest fragrance, and brightly-colored urns and vases decorated with lines of strange flying birds resembling wild geese in wedge-shaped formations.

There were rude spinning-wheels, polished to a shining brightness, and wooden cradles on rockers, their sides decorated with carvings of scenes from daily life which showed an amazingly bold and free quality of imagination.

I was standing in a large bright room staring at a sleeping child when I heard the footsteps. They were coming up the path outside, and they were slow and lagging, as if a man worn out with weariness was having great difficulty in placing one foot before the other.

Drook stiffened and gripped my arm. "It's the father of that kid," he said, gesturing toward the cradle. "I can read his thoughts clearly. He's worn out with pain and grief, and he's been searching for his wife all afternoon. His wife went into the forest to look for—"

Drook hesitated. "Something very strange, Peter. His wife went into the forest to search for a giant."

"A giant?"

"The giant. There's only one, apparently. There is great torment and uncertainty in his mind. He's unable to understand why the giant has not come to relieve his weariness. He is cold and frightened, and he has a stone dagger."

Drook stiffened in sudden alarm. "Careful, Peter. He's at the door!"

The footsteps became very loud suddenly, and we both froze.

The man who stood framed in the doorway was a little above medium height, with a lean handsome face and

tousled dark hair. Torment and shock looked out of his eyes, and his hands shook and he stood staring at us in silence for a moment. First at Drook in stark disbelief, and then at me.

I saw suspicion and then unmistakable hostility flare in his eyes. That didn't surprise me. I was a stranger, and all strangers were to be feared by a people just emerging from barbarism in a world of Homeric marauders wading in from the sea, plundering and singing as they came.

He might have been less frightened if I hadn't been accompanied by a gnome. Whether there were gnomes in his mythology I had no way of knowing, but a man who believed in giants could hardly fail to be chilled by a Martian.

I saw him draw the knife, but I stood my ground. His movements were pitifully slow and fumbling, and I was sure I could handle him if he took it into his head to lunge at me. Something caught at the corner of my eye, and I saw that Drook was edging away from him, and gesturing to me to do likewise.

I must have been quite mad. He came at me with a hoarse groan, and before I could leap back the knife was at my throat.

I had never been quite so close to death. With one hand he gripped my shoulder, and with the other held the knife pressed to my jugular.

You poor, poor devil, I thought. He was going to kill me, but it would have done me no good to hate him. We were separated by gulfs of space and time and language; he had been made desperate by the ebbing of his strength, and the need to protect his home from a marauder bent on pillage. I had failed to realize how quickly a desperate fear could iron out the kinks in the muscles of an exhausted man.

Quite suddenly he collapsed. The knife clattered to the floor, and he sank down and started crying like a crazy man. He dragged himself away

from me across the floor to the cradle. With a great effort he lifted himself up, and looked down at his kid.

He reached out a hand, and rubbed the knuckles gently over the sleeping youngster's face. Then he sank down again with a rasping sob of sheer exhaustion. I watched his breathing become shallow and almost stop.

THE FIRST thing a good physician does when he's faced with a problem of exhaustion is have a look at the patient's blood. With Drook assisting I got my medicine case open, and a neat little portable hematokrit set up.

Now with an ordinary two-capillary tube hematokrit a blood count is quite simple. The tubes are attached to a centrifuge, and when the specimen is whirled about the number of red cells is estimated from the scale on each tube.

Unfortunately nature is a consistent wench only to a degree. Parallel evolution gives you humans more often than it gives you gnomes like Drook on the planets of ten thousand suns.

But you don't always get the kind of blood you can whirl in a centrifuge and measure on a capillary tube scale. Or the kind you can analyze further by staining, and a specific gravity test.

This time we were in luck.

What we got was the kind of blood that ran red in my own veins. Only—it wasn't red. It was faded, down to a few thousand red cells a cubic millimeter. Brother, that's low.

It was the most frightening reduction in erythrocytes I'd ever seen, and indicated a nutritional deficiency state so grave that the sleeping men and women had no right to be alive.

I looked at Drook. The man by the table was still breathing, but his eyes were shut, and he had long since ceased to mutter to himself.

We were working by a table which was in the same style of art as the

chairs and tables. There was a design cut in the wood which had puzzled and disturbed me before I'd set up the hematokrit. Now it took on ominous implications.

It showed a dozen small human figures with their arms extended in piti-ful appeal. Their legs had given way and they were reaching up beseechingly toward a gigantic pair of hands which hovered in the air directly above them.

"It begins to make sense," I said. "The pieces are falling into place."

"I'm glad they're not dreaming, Peter," Drook said. "I'm glad they're sleeping the deep, dreamless sleep of exhaustion."

His eyes filmed with imagined pain. "I doubt if I could endure the despair which would come to them in dreams, I'd have to get out fast."

"They were reduced to despair by famine," I said. "Poor harvests, the dying of their livestock. It's the old, tragic story. The land isn't quite fertile enough. Advanced agriculture could save them, but their husbandry is too crude to turn the trick."

I tapped the hematokrit. "Their diet must have been badly deficient in essential proteins and amino acids. When that occurs over a long period, the body loses its natural ability to synthesize factors necessary for blood building."

"Is there no way to help them?" Drook asked.

"We could teach them scientific agriculture," I said. "But it would take months. From childhood they've been taught to believe that they can solve all of their problems by appealing to the giant. I only wish it was as simple as that."

"The giant?"

"A forest giant," I said. "It's an al-most universal human myth. The giant is a symbol of agricultural fertility. A

mythical deity who goes striding across an impoverished land scattering golden grain in rich abundance."

"Can nothing be done for them, Peter?"

"They'll need stiff shots of concentrated nutrients," I said: "we'll have to go back to the station for the ampoules. But before we cross that bridge I'm going to have a closer look at the land itself."

"The village is hemmed in by a forest, but there must be open farm country within easy walking distance. These people don't live by hunting and fishing; their art shows unmistakably that they're in the settled agricultural stage."

"I don't know, Peter," Drook said, about twenty minutes later by the watch on his beanstalk wrist, a watch that had crossed light-millennia without ceasing to keep perfect time. "You may be right, of course; but this forest seems to be endless."

He stopped to mop his wrinkled gray brow and stare up at a little patch of faded blue sky.

"We'll find tilled fields if we keep on," I said. "These people had to get their food from the land."

"I wonder," said Drook.

I was losing patience with him, but he was so infernally sensitive I didn't want to come right out and upbraid him.

I SAW HIM wince as he tuned in on my thoughts.

"You're not an explorer, Peter," he said. "I am. I say that with the utmost humility. When you've been to the stars fifty or sixty times you can get the feel of a forest like this. Just by instinct, Peter. You can put your ear to the ground without actually seeming to do so."

"All right," I said. "Suppose you tell me what's up ahead. Say—a mile ahead."

"Something that frightens me," Drook said quickly. "It's breathing



like an animal in pain. There were no thoughts in its mind, but there's a kind of crying, you know how a frightened child whimpers and cries in the dark."

I looked at him for a long moment in silence. "Well—we'll soon know!" I said.

I wasn't quite sure whether I believed Drook or not. But if his purpose had been to unnerve me, he'd certainly succeeded. When I saw the light of the clearing gleaming between the trees confidence was at a low ebb, and I didn't much feel like pressing on.

But press on I did. I was determined to settle it once and for all, and I stepped out from between the trees with one thought uppermost in my mind. Drook was all right. A better companion had never accompanied a man to the stars. But I couldn't have him unnerving me by sending his mind leaping ahead and conjuring up imaginary dangers. I couldn't—

The forest seemed to shake and sway about me. I caught my breath and for the first time in my life that I could remember I knew stark, unreasoning fear.

The giant lay sprawled out in the

clearing with his knees drawn up, his arms flung wide. Golden leaves spilled over him, and a swarm of iridescent insects formed a cloud about his head.

He was at least fourteen feet tall, and his fat fleshy-pink body was clothed in a shining garment which glistened with dew. His eyes were closed and his chest rose and fell with his breathing and there was a great jagged gash on his forehead which was invisible from a distance of fifty feet.

I don't know how long I might have stood there staring if Drook hadn't moved quickly past me. There was no fear in him, and his courage made me realize I was behaving like a fool.

The giant had been knocked cold by a falling tree. The tree lay across his chest, pinning him to the ground, and his face was twisted in pain.

It wasn't the face of a grown man; it was the face of a child. The forehead bulged and there were little dimples in the pink and white cheeks. It was the face of a child of seven or eight but it was grotesquely mature in some respects, puckered and chillingly wise.

"He's been knocked out cold," Drook said.

I nodded, looking at the strange, glittering object in the child giant's hand.

It didn't look like a hypodermic, exactly; it was shaped differently, and there were two needles instead of one, and the plunger was a solid metal job.

But it was a hypodermic, all right.

I knelt and took the child giant's pulse. His heart was beating slowly but steadily. I noticed that his skin was pale and clammy and felt cold to the touch.

"He's in a stupor," I said. "The tree knocked him unconscious, all right, but just how long he's been lying here is anybody's guess. I've a feeling it may have been several days."

"What does it mean, Peter?" Drook asked, his voice hardly audible.

"Something very strange," I said. "If I'm guessing right—it doesn't do

violence to any natural law. But it presupposes the existence of an intelligence that isn't native to this planet."

"What kind of intelligence, Peter?"

"That can wait," I said. "Remember what I said about the forest giant? A myth hasn't warm blood in its veins, and a myth can't be knocked unconscious by a falling tree; so the forest-giant goes out the window."

ON AN IMPULSE I lowered my hand until my palm rested on the child giant's cold right arm. "He's not what I thought he was," I said. "But he's needed here as no myth could ever be needed. Without him, the people perish; he's as much a part of them as they are of him."

Drook said: "What are you going to do, Peter?"

"Revive him," I said.

"Revive him, Peter. How?"

A quick-acting stimulant to the heart, brain, muscles and spinal cord should wake him up," I said. "I'll try a shot of caffeine; it's safer than a few other drugs I could use."

With Drook hovering at my elbow I knelt, opened the little black case again, and took out what I needed.

I gave the giant a shot in the right arm.

"We didn't stay very close to him. Drook retreated further than I did, taking refuge behind a big rotting tree trunk at the edge of the clearing. He looked more than ever like a gnome crouching there in shadows, his big ears alert to every sound.

Watching a sleeping giant wake up can be a nerve-shattering experience. When you're responsible it can give you an ill-defined sense of guilt which isn't an easy thing to rationalize.

He woke up slowly. First his eyelids twitched and then one of his limbs jerked spasmodically. His breathing became louder, his chest rose and fell, and he made a gulping sound.

Then, abruptly, he sat up.

He sat up and stared around him,

and his face was the face of a child awakening in a dark room, and blinking in a sudden burst of light from an opening door.

He looked frightened, then puzzled, then reassured. He staggered to his feet and raised his hand and stared down at the strange looking hypodermic. Then his mouth began to work and I thought for a moment he was going to cry. I thought he was going to break down and blubber.

Instead, his infant laughter rang out suddenly in the still forest, clear and joyous and carefree. Not infant laughter exactly—childish laughter. Before its echoes could die away, he'd turned and was crashing through the underbrush like a seven-year-old interrupted in his play who must hurry to make up for all the fun he's missed.

But it wasn't fun he'd missed, and when we caught up with him in the village fifteen minutes later he was no longer laughing. He was kneeling before one of the houses, and lifting the exhausted men and women out through an open window into the sunlight.

He was setting them down and injecting them one by one. There was a tender concern in his face, and more wisdom than I had ever thought to see in the eyes of a child.

We stood in shadows, Drook and I, and watched him.

"I don't know exactly what's in that syringe, but I can make a pretty good guess," I said. "Tracer minerals, and just the right nucleic acid hydrolysis and aerobic fermentation products. He'll overcome their nutritional deficiency so fast you'll be able to see the color creep back into their cheeks."

THAT WAS a slight over-statement of course. Actually it would take three or four days. But in a few days—and when I shut my eyes I could see it—the village would come back to life. There would be laughter in the houses again. Strange moons would rise and set, and infants with chubby

cheeks would sit up in their cradles, and women with golden hair would smile warmly down at them.

They would never have to worry about wresting a living from the land. Even the men would not have to work in the fields, but would be free to create objects of beauty all day long. No wonder the village craftsmanship was so superb.

"They will never know," I said. "There will never be any need for them to know."



"You say he came from another part of space?" Drook whispered. "A child of some tremendous super-race? What makes you so sure, Peter?"

"It is all of a piece," I said. "At most, our teleports span a hundred thousand light years. We have just barely reached to the far edge of the Galaxy. There are giant suns beyond for a million times that distance, from the Whirlpool Nebula to the farthest intergalactic gap within range of our telescopes."

"But he is a human child."

"Where in space has man not encountered his own face mirrored large," I said.

"Then we are no longer needed here, Peter."

"You'll be glad to get back to your painting," I said, consolingly. "And now that you're certified as healed, you won't have to stay at the Station. You can go out again tomorrow, if you wish."

"With you, Peter?"

"I'm not an explorer," I said.

Drook straightened, his eyes shining, the gnome-face half in brightness. "And you'll be glad to see Seaton again, and talk this over with him, and tell him what you've accomplished."

"How did you guess it," I said.

"Peter, if we moved out from these bushes and let him see us—"

"Are you out of your mind?" I snapped. "What would we gain by that? Would you have him mistake me for a villager?"

"Just to see the expression on his face, Peter."

"No," I said, very firmly. "It's time we started moving, I'll grant you that. But—"

"A child has to learn and grow," Drook said, musingly. "And good parents believe in independence, too. Send a child away to school; give him a whole planet for a playground and workshop."

"That's about it," I said.

He nodded. "All right, Peter; let's go."

We didn't attempt to cross through the village to the field beyond. We circled the village through a woody patch, and approached the teleport at a leisurely walk, as if we had all the time in the world.

Drook asked me one more question before we scraped away the vines. "They wouldn't have to be mechanical in a strict sense."

"Not at all," I said.

We went back to Earth across tens of thousands of light years, firm friends one moment, the next a swirl of antigravitics in the gulfs between the stars.

Drook emerged thinking of bright pigments on canvas, and the loneliness of the ward and how good it would be to go out to the stars again. At least, that was my guess.

I emerged thinking of my darling. I told myself I'd go right up to Ward H, and punch my off-duty card, and

we'd dine in that smoky little restaurant even if it meant I'd fall asleep at the table and dream about giants. Jack the Giant Killer or maybe the Cyclops who terrorized Ulysses and his crew on a high cliff above the wine-dark sea. There were some pretty formidable giants in our mythology, too.

BUT I HAD guessed wrong about Drook. He wasn't wondering if he really had what it took to go Gauguin one better. He was still thinking about the beautiful village we'd left dreaming in the light of an alien sun.

"A child sent away to school," he murmured, close at my heels. "Given a whole planet for a playground and workshop. The modern tendency is to make them as lifelike as possible. A child learns more quickly that way. His sympathies are more directly appealed to."

Giants there were in those days. A quotation...Biblical. Giants in the

earth. In a minute, I told myself, we'd be at the door of Ward C. I'd stop walking abruptly, and Drook would take his departure with a steady hand-clasp, and a shake of the gnome-head. He'd drift off into the ward.

"Peter, those villagers knew about the giant. But they wouldn't have to know; they could just—run down. Then the giant would restore them, and they'd go right on where they left off. If the giant were really clever, he'd never let them know. He'd never show himself at all. He might have to at first, but later on he'd keep out of sight."

I turned and faced him. "All right, say it," I demanded; "get it off your chest."

"He'd never let them know, Peter, that they were merely ingenious educational toys."

Did Her Millions Lead To Murder?

*Or didn't the killer
recognize his
victim?*

don't miss

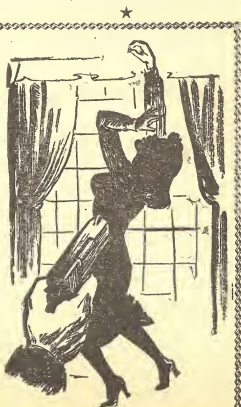
DEATH STALKS ON BLOODY FEET

by William F. Schwartz

*it leads off the
February issue of*

FAMOUS DETECTIVE STORIES

Ask Your Newsdealer To Reserve Your Copy!



READIN' and WRITHIN'

BOOK REVIEWS

by Damon Knight



J. T. McINTOSH'S "One in Three Hundred" (Doubleday, \$2.95), like his recent "Born Leader," is a forthright, good-humored, dramatic tale that's remarkably easy and pleasant to read; it is also, like its predecessor, one of the year's most painful collections of avoidable mistakes.

McIntosh is a gee-whiz writer.

Let me give you an example. A man sits down at his typewriter to outline a new plot. A solar flare (he writes) threatens all life on Earth. Gee whiz! There aren't enough existing spaceships to get everybody to Mars, so they build a lot of dinky little ships. Gee whiz! But even so, only one out of 300 can go, so they have to send those lieutenants (sic), the ones who are going to captain the ships (sic), around to all the towns to pick out the ones that are going to go. Well, we follow one of these dinky rotten little haywire ships that can only take 11 people. Well, as soon as they take off, the pilot notices that there isn't going to be enough fuel. Gee whiz! So he...

This is as good a place as any to stop and say let's-see-now. Build a lot of dinky little ships that can transport 11 people each? Great; this makes fully as much sense as building a lot of teaspoons to put out a fire with; or, let's say, building a lot of garbage scows to evacuate North America. 1) The "lifeships" are of a size and design for which there couldn't possibly have been any previous demand. Unlike larger passenger ships, they have to be designed and engineered from scratch. There will inevitably be bugs in them.

2) It is enormously wasteful of metal, of engines, of metering instruments, of crewmen, and of everything else necessary to a ship, to build 100 little ships rather than one big one.) The "lifeships," which McIntosh has taking off directly from Earth, have to be duck-designed—built for the wasteful short haul up from Earth as well as the long haul to Mars.

...And so on. There's matter here for several reams of discussion—including at least one elegant solution that McIntosh has missed entirely—but I'm not trying to tell you how McIntosh should have written his story. The man who invents a tale can tell it any damned way he pleases, as long as he justifies it.

Take another look. Once our ship gets out into space, the passengers discover it is too well insulated; they are slowly being roasted to death by their own body heat, until they take a couple of insulating panels off. Gee whiz! ...At the time of the story, the author would have us believe, we have been in the spaceship business for some years; we've got a colony on Mars and regular, if infrequent, passenger service thereto—and in all this time, nobody has figured out a way to regulate the interior temperatures of spaceships, until this very moment? Really?

Another crisis arises when somebody has to go outside in a spacesuit, and it's discovered that the helmet has "a jagged, irregular lump of metal" inside it which prevents it from being worn. Gee whiz again! But let's see now...could this happen to a machined helmet? Are you sure?

Faults like these are exasperating in a story otherwise so good. So—to name one more—is the effort involved in trying to forget that McIntosh's nice British characters are supposed to be natives of the midwestern U.S.A. Most exasperating of all, not one of this story's flaws is essential to it. If they had all been corrected, the story would have been basically much the same; but it would have been a thousand to read—and beyond doubt it would have lived longer than it is now doomed to do.

The original novelet, "One in Three Hundred," is the most effective and meaningful of the three from *Fantasy and Science Fiction* which have been combined to make this book. "One in a Thousand," which deals with the trip to Mars, is the least plausible; McIntosh's spaceship episodes are uniformly odd. The final section, "One Too Many," brings up an interesting new problem—the little Caesar who ought to have been left at home—but McIntosh's grip on it is feeble.

MOST OF the one-author collections we've seen recently have been as disappointing as they're traditionally supposed shouldn't miss, is C. M. Kornbluth's "The Explorers" (Ballantine, paperbound, 35¢). "Gomez," which leads off the volume, was written especially for it; "The Rocket of 1955" and "Thirteen O'Clock" first appeared as long ago as 1941. In between come "The Mindworm," "The Altar at Midnight," "The Goodly Creatures," "Friend to Man," "With These Hands" and "That Share of Glory." All of them are written with distinction, even the cut-and-dried potboiler, "Friend to Man."

The remarkable thing is not that these nine stories, written over a 13-period, are uniform in quality—they aren't—but that the earliest and slightest of them will stand comparison today with the average product of our best magazines. Kornbluth starts there, and goes up.

Three of the best are the result of a serious attempt to graft the mainstream short story onto science fiction. I dislike these on principle. The very best of the lot, "The Goodly Creatures," flunks the key clause of Sturgeon's definition of science fiction—"a story" which would not have happened at all without its scientific content."* The other two pass, barely, but are so close to mundane stories that they make me almost equally uncomfortable. "The Altar at Midnight" is about the gulf between generations, and the lure of destructive, well-paid occupations, and the guilt of scientists, and similar things—all of which strike familiar chords. The center of attention is a young spaceman, hideously deformed by his craft; I might have missed the mundane parallel, though I felt it, if Kornbluth himself hadn't spelled it out for me—the old used-up railroad men who con-

gregate in a dismal bar in "Gandytown." "With These Hands" is merely the lament for handicraftsmanship—already a cliché in the mainstream story—which Kornbluth has translated from book-binding to sculpture. But when I say "merely," I lie; each of these stories represents the triumph of a master technician over an inappropriate form—as if, on a somewhat grander scale, Milton had written "Paradise Lost" in limericks, and made you like it.

I think these stories explore a dangerous dead end in science fiction; but I am unable to wish they had not been written.

WILSON TUCKER'S "The Science-Fiction Subtreasury" (Rinehart \$2.75), another of Rinehart's exasperatingly beautiful and slovenly volumes, will make no history. About a day before this one arrived I had been saying to myself that at least Rucker wouldn't beat me into print with a short-story collection, because he hadn't had enough of them published. I was right, too, at least dating from "The Tourist Trade," which appeared in 1940 and was the first short story of professional quality Tucker wrote. That one, anthologized elsewhere, is not here. "My Brother's Wife" and "Able to Zebra,"—the latter a first-rate bit of Tucker jape—are worth reading. The rest—"The Street Walker," "McMLV," "Home Is Where the Wreck Is," "Gentlemen—the Queen!," "The Job Is Ended," "Exit," "The Wayfaring Strangers" and "The Mountaineer"—are maiden efforts and culls. Tucker's cheerful introduction is the brightest spot in the book.

Judith Merril's new paperbound collection, "Human?" (Lion, 25¢) is exactly the mixture I like best in an anthology—old favorites and neglected classics. Here, for example, among such (to me) familiar and well-loved stories as Leiber's "Smoke Ghost" and Asimov's "Liars!", a wonderful bit called "ghosts" by Don Marquis—and a gem of an H. G. Wells short story that I'd never seen before—"The Temptation of Harringay." Out of 15 stories, in fact, there are only two I really object to—Chad Oliver's "The Boy Next Door," which I found trite and unfunny, and Graham Doar's "Who Knows His Brother"—one of those post-atomic mutation things that occurred simultaneously to so many people, down to and including Ackerman, that it's hard to stomach any of them. And if it had been me, I would have chosen almost any Algis Budrys story except his diffuse "Riya's Founding." All the rest, by MacDonald, Russell (who outmatheosons a certain rising young writer who shall remain nameless), Seabright, Derleth, de Camp, Sturgeon, John Collier and Walter M. Miller, Jr., are the cream of the cream.

"The Giant Anthology of Science Fiction," edited by Leo Margulies and Oscar J. Friend (Merlin, \$3.95) is a bargain or not, depending on how you feel about novels from *Thrilling Wonder*. I can take them

* I'm quoting William Atheling, Jr., who quoted Sturgeon from memory.

or leave them alone, myself, and there are five in this book—"Forgotten World" by Edmond Hamilton, "Sword of Tomorrow" by Henry Kuttner, "Things Pass By" by Murray Leinster, "Island in the Sky" by Manly Wade Wellman, and "The Sun Maker" by Jack Williamson.

I find the book valuable—but not worth its price—for Heinlein's "By His Bootstraps" and Van Vogt's "Rogue Ship." Also present are Ray Cummings' real old original "Girl in the Golden Atom"; the usual Leigh Brackett story—this time called "Enchantress of Venus"; and Fred Brown's "Gateway to Darkness," which has a wonderful punchline.

The editors' introduction is foul.

Frederick Pohl's "Assignment in Tomorrow" (Hanover, \$2.95—not to be confused with "Assignment in Eternity," which is a Heinlein collection) has been mostly culled from the last couple of years' magazine output, which is no trick. All the same, it's an unusually good anthology. There is one, count it, one lemon—a breathtakingly bad story called "Official Record," by Fletcher Pratt; the rest, by Sturgeon, Bixby, Kornbluth, Bradbury, del Rey,* Bester,* Vonnegut, Schmitz, Williamson, Budrys, Gold,* Wilson, Phillips,* Brown and Farmer,* range from high B's to A's on my scale, and five of them (those starred) are special favorites of mine.



"REVOLT IN 2100," by Robert A. Heinlein (Shasta, \$3.50) is the third volume in the Future History series; it includes a considerably rewritten "If This Goes On—," "Coventry," and "Misfit."

"If This Goes On—" as originally published in 1940, was Heinlein's first novel, and a massive addition to the structure he was beginning to build in science fiction.

Fifteen years ago, when this story was written, Heinlein must have been happy as a pup in clover: he had discovered an interesting and lucrative occupation, most of whose practitioners were underheads. He had only to apply common sense, intelligence—and an uncommon arsenal of knowledge—to turn science fiction on its ear; and with something near the shortest apprenticeship on record, he set about doing just that.

Imaginary tyrannical religions in science fiction are a dime a dozen, each one less plausible than the last. It took Heinlein to show what might happen to Christianity

in this country under given, perfectly possible conditions—mass communications, an hysterical populace, and a backwoods gospel shouter for a catalyst; and if anyone present is less frightened of that picture now than when the story was written, I wish he would try to convince me.

Revolution, as I've had occasion to mention elsewhere, has always been a stock theme in science fiction; it's romantic, it's reliable, and it's as phony as a Martian princess.

Who but Heinlein ever pointed out, as he does here in detail, that modern revolution is big business? And who but Heinlein would have seen that fraternal organizations, for 30 years the butt of American highbrow humor, would make the perfect nucleus for an American underground against tyranny?

The present revision is chiefly designed to make the hero and heroine more like people we know, and less like the principals in a medieval romance. I'm afraid I regret the loss of the storybook romance between John Lyle and his Temple handmaiden, but I concede automatically that the new ending is more lifelike. Nearly all the new prose is a joy in itself; I'm especially appreciative of the added space given to Zebadiah Jones, the wisecracker without whom no Heinlein story is complete.

One of the minor changes, though, makes me painfully conscious of my own drawbacks as a critic of Heinlein. In the original version, Lyle has to bail out of a stolen jet without shutting off the torch. Problem: how to keep from getting fried. Solution: he wraps himself in the seat cover, which happens to be made of asbestos. As you can see, this is from desperation, and Heinlein has now solved the problem more elaborately and much more plausibly. The funny thing is that I miss the old version. I remember the flash of heat as Lyle went through that jet. I know it was hokum, but I don't care; I liked it. It felt right.

My trouble is simply that I was seventeen when this story was first published; my most impressionable age happened to coincide with a peak year in science fiction, and the effect seems to have been permanent. However, I've done my best to overcome this lack; I have collected every adverse criticism of Heinlein I could find. So far I have two: 1) His plots are weak. 2) He uses slang. Both of these statements are obviously true, and one seems to me about as unimportant as the other. So there you are. Either Heinlein is the nearest thing to a great story-teller the field has yet produced, or with all my pennyweighting I'm hopelessly biased on the subject; take your choice.

"Coventry"—if there's really anybody in the audience who hasn't read it—is a kind of footnote to the novel, and a bridge to the fascinating world of "Methuselah's Children." "Misfit" is, as even I can see, an awkwardly written short story, chiefly

notable because it introduces the mathematical genius Libby, who later turns up as one of the supporting players in "Methusalem."

There is a note by Heinlein, "Concerning Stories Never Written," which partially satisfies my curiosity about (but whets my appetite for) "The Sound of His Wings," "Eclipse," and "The Stone Pillow." Still unexplained are "Word Edgewise," "Fire Down Below!" and "Da Capo."

There is, finally, a remarkable introduction by Henry Kuttner. That makes two out of three of these Shasta volumes—Kuttner's and Mark Reinsberg's—whose introductions have been of a critical quality that we simply don't expect to find in this field. Perhaps the subject has something to do with it.

"A Handbook of Science Fiction and Fantasy," compiled by Donald H. Tucker—available in this country, at \$1.50, from Howard Devore, 16536 Evanston St., Detroit 24, Mich.—is one of those astonishing labors of love that every now and then emerges from the pulpy gray mass of fandom. Months of gruelling work must have gone into this—it's 151 neatly mimeographed legal-size pages, crammed with brief accounts of almost everything you can think of—writers, editors, anthologies (with complete lists of titles), magazines (with complete dates of publication), series bound editions, pseudonyms, and I don't know what all. Absolutely invaluable.

BRIEFLY NOTED

"SCIENCE-FICTION THINKING MACHINES," edited by Groff Conklin (Vanguard, \$3.50)—an uneven but fascinating collection, from Karel Capek to Poul Anderson.

"Lost Continents," by L. Sprague de Camp (Gnome, \$5.00)—about Atlantis, Mu and Lemuria—fact, theory, speculation and seventeen assorted varieties of crackpottery, with maps, illustrations, four appendices, notes, bibliography and index. I very much hope this is the last word on the subject.

"The Inexhaustible Sea," by Hawthorne Daniel and Francis Minot (Dodd, Mead, \$4.00)—required reading for science fiction writers. Our descendants had better like fish!

"The Second Galaxy Reader of Science Fiction," edited by H. L. Gold (Crown, \$3.50)—a huge grab-bag from *Galaxy*: 81 stories—12 A's, 18 B's and one lone atrocity.

"Engineers' Dreams," by Willy Ley (Viking, \$3.50)—Ley at his best in the stories of the Channel Tunnel, the Floating Islands, and seven more.

"The Joker," by Jean Malaguais (Doubleday, \$3.95)—Orwell and Kafka, in a playful narrative that is often fascinating, but has very little to say.



Every now and then, we will receive a book — or a selection of books — which we would like to review at once, but which cannot be reviewed in the subsequent issue simply because none of our reviewers have had a chance to consider the items.

Such a volume is Ballantine Books' "Star Short Novels", edited by Frederik Pohl. The selections therein are "Little Men", by Jessamyn West; "For I Am A Jealous People", by Lester del Rey; and "To Here And The Easel" by Theodore Sturgeon.

To say that I want to read this volume because del Rey gave me a generous hint as to what his novel was about is not the same as recommending it — but this will have to do until one of our regulars, or I, get around to a thorough perusal and digestion. If anyone wants to buy the book meanwhile, on speculation — and the three authors are usually worth a small risk — you can obtain it at your local dealer for a mere 35¢. None of the three stories have appeared before, incidentally, and whether I enjoy this particular trio or not, let me put in my vote in favor of Ballantine's continuing the triple-decker offering at regular intervals. RWL

THE ADVENTURERS

by C. M. Kornbluth



Now why wouldn't a space-pilot be welcomed into the membership rolls of an Adventurers Club?



IT WAS A fair-to-middling afternoon at the Adventurers Club. Cleveland was not pre-blitz London, so it looked little enough like a club; instead of oak paneling, the walls were a bilious green plaster.

The waiters were not ancient and subservient Britons, but mostly flippant youths in overstarched mess-jackets; they wore chronometer wristwatches and finger-rings. The club did not radiate the solid certainty of the fixed and immovable, which is supposed to be such a comfort to the English. It had, as a matter of fact, been established in its present two floors of a business district office building for only three months, having been evicted from a Lake Boulevard loft-building destined to be torn down and replaced by a garage and parking lot. The Adventurers, however, had done their best in the brief quarter-year to make the place homey. Mounted heads covered the walls like a rash, and an obviously non-functional fireplace had been assembled of polished marble slabs and over it written the Adventurers' motto: "*A Hearth and Home for Those Who Have Strayed Far from the Beaten Path.*" On two new brass

andirons in the center of the big fireplace were two small, uncharred logs crossed at an angle of 45 degrees.

If the Club was out of character, however, so were most of its members. Over his roast beef, the Man Who Had Known Dr. Cook was presiding. He puffed, between sleepy chews: —"I tell you, sir, the Doctor is one of the most malignant men in the history of exploration. I have been a naval officer myself and know what it is to lay aloft in a gale, but I hold no sort or kind of brief for Peary, the man who crucified the Doctor." It was an impossible stretch of the imagination to picture the Man Who Had Known Dr. Cook laying aloft in a gale, or, for that matter, doing anything but exactly what he was doing: sloppily chewing roast beef that would add to the many inches of his paunch and further lubricate his greasy face.

At a coffee-table, Captain Trevor-Beede was drinking, but not coffee. "Prunes," he was thickly saying to a waiter, "prunes are what you need. Here in the States, here you don't know how to cook prunes. Another b. and s." The waiter went for the b. and s., and Captain Trevor-Beede continued to address a moth-eaten springbok head opposite him: —"prunes should be soaked. That's all there is to cooking prunes. Prunes should be

soaked overnight, and then you should cook them. That's all there is to cooking prunes." Captain Trevor-Beede was in the diplomatic service.

At a quarter slot-machine in a corner, under a mournful and rather small walrus-head with chipped ivories, the Headshrinker was losing money with nervous haste. Click-whiz-whirr-bump, bump, bump. Click-whiz-whirr-bump, bump, bump. Click-whiz-whirr-bump, bump, bump. A minor payoff broke the rhythm, and he frowned as some quarters clunked into the scoop. He picked them up and began again. Click-whiz-whirr-bump, bump, bump. He had contributed one of the most unusual of the exhibits which filled a glass case against a wall: the doll-size, shrunken body of his eight-year-old son, born to him during his captivity, by his Jivaro wife. The son had died during the rigorous escape to the sea, and the Headshrinker had used his acquired tribal knowledge to do a really superior job of shrinking before he continued on his lighter way. Click-whiz-whirr-bump, bump, bump. "I was delicious, you know," he would shyly explain, "but it's really an ambitious bit of work. There weren't the right kind of ants there, you know, and I was in a perfect funk for fear they'd botch the skin all up." He was a one. Click-whiz-whirr-bump, bump, bump.

A waiter slouched up to a placid young man in a grey uniform. "Betcha nervous," he said in a chummy way. "You want a drink?"

"Drink? Oh, no!" he said, very much surprised. He thought most people knew by then that the Shield was a lot stronger guarantee of Sobriety than the White Ribbon had ever been. But it was news to the waiter; he shrugged and walked away, and the young man continued to wait in a comfortable armchair that would have suggested a London club if its leather upholstery had not been Cocktail-Lounge Red.

The Man Who Had Known Dr.

Cook was through with his roast beef, his baked potato, his chef's salad, his two baskets of French bread, his innumerable pats of butter, his sweetened coffee and his pie *a la mode*. He wobbled over to the young man and said: "I think we're ready for you now, youngster; the committee-room's back there." He followed him and on the way the Man collected Captain Trevor-Beede, who shambled after like a bear in tweeds, and the Headshrinker, who had finally lost all his quarters. The youth had met them at dinner the day before.

THE COMMITTEE-ROOM had a long table and carved-oak chairs with the names of late adventurers engraved on brass plates sunk into their backs. The Man closed the door solemnly, wobbled to the head of the table and wedged himself into an armchair. The others sat down, but the young man didn't know whether he was supposed to until the Headshrinker cracked a nervous smile and jerked out the chair next to him. "It's quite all right, you know," he told him; "we don't stand on ceremony here."

He sat down, and the Man started: "I tell you, sir, it's good to see young blood about the old Hearth and Home again. And I venture to say, there is none of us who has strayed as far from the beaten path as you, youngster!"

The idea surprised him; he'd never thought of it that way. He tried to explain: "It's very good of you, sir, but I wouldn't put it like that at all. In fact, I suppose I've stuck closer to beaten paths than anybody else here; why, I wouldn't be here at all if I hadn't!"

"Paradox," grunted Captain Trevor-Beede. "Let's have the rest of it and get on with the business."

"It's no paradox, sir. Why, where would I be if I'd got any ideas of my own about the trajectory, instead of taking Plot Room's word for it? I'd be nowhere, that's where I'd be, sir!"

"You needn't be modest with us, you know," said the nervous little Headshrinker. "After all, Lieutenant, over the dinner-table we do like to keep ourselves within bounds—" Here he shot a quick look at the Man, who went red. "—but we're out to assess your qualifications for membership."

"Yes, *Leff*-tenant," said Captain Trevor-Beede. "Now if you'd be so good as to give us some idea of the perils of your explorations—" He took out a pigskin notebook and pencil. That paralyzed the youth.

"Well, captain, they aren't really explorations, I guess. I just follow the plot on the table, keep her turned, you know, and then I set her down in the cradle; I generally sleep and play some handball until she's loaded up and ready to rip again. You should see that handball court they have up there at Luna Three! It's three times the right size, but you can really cover ground up there. Boy, can you hit some fancy shots!"

He was aware that the membership-committee was dismayed by something or other he had said, and hastened to make amends: "Oh, you shouldn't get the idea that handball's all I do, of course."

"Tennis?" asked the Headshrinker wryly.

"Now you're joking, sir. But the handball's necessary to keep in trim; sometimes you have to tune that table awfully fast!" He whistled and wiped his dry and healthy brow. "On the new involute approach it's all partial differentials, all the way in from Luna gravity—sometimes four sets of four every minute for fifteen minutes; you really have to whip out your approximations. And man, they'd better be right! It isn't like the old grazing-spiral days, I'll tell you that, sir!"

The Man Who Had Known Dr. Cook said: "You do—mathematics—up there? In the ship?"

"I should say so!" the young man

told him enthusiastically. "Why mathematics is all you've got up there—you can't see because the ports are closed; you can't hear anything because of the jets, and there isn't anything to hear. The instruments can't be sensitive and last out a take-off at the same time. All you have is what you know about the weight and the motion of the ship, and the weight and the motion of the Earth and Moon and Sun, so you have to take it from there. What have you got *except* mathematics? But the Plot Room does all the really tough stuff before the takeoff. All a pilot has to do is keep one jump ahead of the pointers under the table and keep his control-pointers lined up with them. That's what we call 'tuning the table,' maybe I should have said; and the way I told you, the first approximation's good enough for that."

"What if it isn't?" asked the Man.

The space pilot shrugged his grey-clad shoulders. "That's all," he said. "You take a trip." He thought of three classmates.

"If you were admitted," asked the Captain, "you would, of course, take a Club Flag to the moon on one of your—runs?"

The young man looked troubled. "I'm afraid I couldn't do that, sir," he said. "You know, it takes an awful lot of money to get there and back. I'd never be able to justify it to the supercargo. I ferry heavy elements, after all—it's the job." He thought a moment. "But tell you what, captain! I could take a *microfilm* of the flag—wouldn't that be just as good?"

"Um," said the captain, who had planted his flag on Everest.

"Well, you know..." said the Headshrinker, who had planted his flag on a ridgepole deeper in Jivaro country than any other white man had ever gone.

"Urg!" strangled the Man Who Had Known Captain Cook. He had planted his flag at the North Pole, long be-

fore that hypothetical point was the Times Square of global air traffic.

THE CAPTAIN asked bluntly, "What adventures have you had?"

"Adventures?" asked the young man. "Well, sir, the way I look at it, it's like this. People don't *have* adventures any more; if they do, they don't live to tell about it. You see, we're all so tied up and meshed together in a thing like the Moon-run—if one man makes a mistake, the he can make up for it himself. That's what you call an Adventure—doing something wrong and having it come out all right anyway because you used your head. But up there—well, if I do something wrong, then it's out of my hands right away. And I can't expect Plot Room, by dumb luck, to compensate for just that mistake of mine, can I? No, sir—the way it looks to me, Adventure is just about washed up, if you'll pardon me saying so."

The Headshrinker said flatly: "Mr. Chairman, I move that the examination be closed and the candidate's qualifications be voted on." He turned apologetically to the young man. "You'll have to leave now, you know—while we make up our minds."

"Oh, sure," said the space pilot. "And thank you, gentlemen, for a very interesting discussion." He walked out

and carefully closed the door behind him.

"If he joins," said Captain Trevor-Beede immediately and explosively, "we'll all have to resign at once. 'Doing something wrong and having it come right anyway!'"

"Move to reject the candidate," said the Headshrinker.

"Question."

"Aye."

"Aye."

"Carried," sighed the Man. They sat in silence while he rang for a waiter. He told the man: "Please inform Space Service Lieutenant Allen that the committee has regretfully been compelled to ask him to withdraw his application for membership."

"Yes, sir," said the waiter.

Outside, he said to the young man in grey, "No dice, Lieutenant; they turned you down."

"Well, thanks," said the lieutenant regretfully. He walked slowly from the club, looking his last on the mounted heads and the case of curios and the unlit fire.

The members were awfully old-fashioned, he thought, but it would have been *such* a handy place to have lunch on Earth, when he happened to find a breathing-spell from the dull routine of his occupation!



2 Powerful Tales of Midnight Mystery

THE BRILLIANT DEATHS



A "Mike Sledge" Novel by Don De Boe

MURDER'S MASQUERADE



by E. E. Clement

are featured in
the current
issue of

SMASHING DETECTIVE STORIES

on all newsstands now



A Department of Letters and Comment

As I Was Saying...

LAST TIME, I closed my remarks promising to take up the question of what part authors play in preventing a good editor from getting good stories. To recapitulate: we were talking *as if* everyone agreed what constitutes a "good editor" and "good stories".

For the sake of discussion we'll also define "author" here as "anyone who sends in manuscripts to an editor".

I'd better warn you in advance that you may have seen all these points before; and if you follow *Writers Digest*, or any other writers' publications, or have read books on the subject, it's almost a sure thing that you won't find anything new here.

But I'll try to keep from being unbearably pedantic; in fact, I think I'll take off on "Alice in Wonderland" for a spell. Let's start with a fan named Al, and duck into a private club where

the March Hare, the Mad Hatter, and the Dormouse—editors all—are gathered.

IT WAS a large enough table, but the three were huddled in one corner of it, a large pile of envelopes beside each one. They looked up as Al approached. "No room! Overstocked!" they cried in chorus.

Al took a seat on the other side of the table. "I thought there was always room for a good story," he said.

The Dormouse looked at him, whiskers quivering. "Are you an author?"

"No," said Al, "but what have you got against authors? Why, it would seem to me that just by the law of average there ought to be some good stories in that stack of manuscripts there."

"By what?" asked the Dormouse.

"By the law..." began Al, but the

others chorused, "*Not to miss the deadline, that is the law!*"

The March Hare waved his finger at Al. "And that," he said, "is the first thing an editor must learn. In the beginning is the deadline; in the middle is the deadline; and at the end is the deadline."

"Well, of course I can understand that you have to get the magazine out..." Al started.

The Mad Hatter nodded approvingly at him. "Then you're an uncommonly bright young fellow, because thousands of readers and fans don't understand anything like that at all. They think that all the editor has to do is read stories. Let me tell you that our reading time is strictly limited: we have to send the copy out before deadline, and if we haven't found enough of the best to fill an issue, then we have to start scrounging around for the second best, or the third best..."

"...or the best of the worst," interrupted the March Hare. A gentle snore interrupted him, and he shot a glance at the Dormouse. "Asleep again," he muttered and caught the Mad Hatter's eye. The two nodded then chanted in unison: "*Deadline!*"

"...or the least of the worst of the best, or the best of the least of the worst," said the Dormouse quickly, sitting up straight. "Time to read manuscripts," he said, and the three of them started drawing submissions out of the envelopes hastily, completely ignoring Al.

Sniffs, squeals, grunts, sighs, and moans erupted from the trio as the manuscripts were pored over, cast aside, picked up, cast aside again. Al noted that each of the three had a very small stack of submissions to their left now, while the piles to their right seemed towering. "The mailman must have come when I wasn't looking," he thought. Sure enough, something in gray scuttled up to the table and was gone again before he could make it out clearly—but now there was an-

other huge pile of unopened manuscripts before the three.

At length the March Hare looked up and seemed to remember that Al was there. He nudged the Dormouse, whose head was nodding again. "Let's show him some of the rejects," he suggested. The other two nodded, and pushed the tallest piles over toward Al, who picked up the first manuscript.

"Why, this is written in pencil." He picked up the second. "And this is typed single space."

The Dormouse waved another manuscript in the air. "I counted seventeen uncorrected typographical errors on a single page, on this one."

"Here," said the Mad Hatter, "the author has corrected his typographical errors. I am not sure, mind you, but I think the author has included his laundry list between the lines."

Al looked at another manuscript. "The ribbon is rather faint, on this one, isn't it?"

"Now I would say," broke in the Mad Hatter, "this one here was typed on a machine that the author built himself in his dark room."

"This writer," announced the Dormouse, "starts a new paragraph on every other page, whether he needs to or not."

Al blinked. "Well, why don't you tell writers how manuscripts should be submitted?"

There was a brief silence, then the three chanted in chorus, "*We've told them in English; we've told them in Dutch; we've told them in Latin and Greek. But however we tell them—it pains us much—we get things like these every week!*"

THE DORMOUSE rubbed his eyes. "You see, everywhere you turn these days, you'll find advertisements saying, 'You, too, can write!' and people get the idea that writing is a wonderful way of just sitting down

[Turn To Page 86]


**NOW! NIP WAIST
FLATTEN TUMMY
SLIM HIPS**
... WITH THE NEW 

Figure-Trimmer

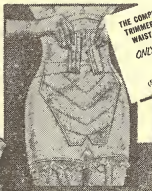
THE COMBINATION ADJUSTABLE WAIST AND TUMMY LEVELER

Now reduce that WAIST AND TUMMY Bulging look instantly. Figure-Trimmer literally pushes back in that dropped bulging abdominal protruberance, and then permits you to tuck in your waistline exactly as many inches as will be comfortable for you. Look at the picture and see how it works. Made of the finest materials for long life. Figure-Trimmer corrects the faults of other garments. Some hold in the stomach but push out the waistline. But with Figure-Trimmer you slenderize both the waist and tummy appearance. What a nice feeling you'll have wearing your new Figure-Trimmer.

HERE'S HOW THE AMAZING NEW ADJUSTABLE FIGURE-TRIMMER WORKS

Figure-Trimmer's novel waistline adjustable feature makes it easy for you to have the waistline the new fashions demand. Figure Trimmer is an exclusive of Ward Green Co. and is sent to you directly. Be the first to wear Figure-Trimmer and you'll be first in the beauty parade.

Illustrated below
is the PANTS Style.
The PANTS Trim-
mer is ideal for
use under slacks,
shorts, and other
loose over-wear.



THE COMPLETE FIGURE-
TRIMMER & GARTERS.
WAIST SIZES 22-36

ONLY \$3.49

(Sizes 37 & up \$4.49)

TRY 10 DAYS

WARD GREEN CO., Dept. F-661
43 West 61st St., New York 23, N. Y.

Rush for 10 days against the new FIGURE-TRIMMER. After wearing
10 days I may return for full refund of purchase price if not completely
satisfied.

- (CHECK ONE)**
☐ Send C.O.D. and I will pay premium plus postage.
☐ I enclose full payment. (Ward Green pays postage.)

(CHECK STYLE)
☐ REGULAR—\$5.19 (Sizes 37 & up \$4.49) ☐ PANTS—\$6.19 (Sizes 37 & up \$5.49)

My Whole Amount Is Dollars

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY ZONE STATE

**MAIL
COUPON NOW!**

Get Rid of UGLY PIMPLES

THIS NEW EASY WAY!

Amazing new medicated lotion developed by a doctor works wonders by clearing up skin blemishes in one week or less!

DON'T let a bad complexion ruin romance, spoil your fun, cause you to be embarrassed, shy or ashamed. If you suffer from acne, the common external cause of pimples among young people, try this wonderfully effective medicated lotion that was developed by a practicing physician to clear up his own teen-ager's complexion after other methods had failed. It has produced astonishing results for many thousands of others. It is **GUARANTEED** to help you or it won't cost you a single cent!

Doesn't Show On Your Face

Keraplex is a skin-colored lotion (NOT a greasy salve or ointment) that is quickly absorbed by the skin and goes right down in the pores where its healing and antiseptic ingredients can go to work. After you have applied it, there is no trace left on the surface. In fact, it makes a perfect powder base... actually improves the tone of the skin! It is pleasant and easy to use—leaving your skin soft, clean and fragrant.



BEFORE

Note more than a dozen blemishes on just one side of this boy's face before KERAPLEX was applied.



AFTER

Same boy had used KERAPLEX twice a day for only 5 days when above photo was taken. Note the amazing improvement.

NO COST Unless It ACTUALLY Does Clear Up Your Skin!

An analysis of results, taken from the "case history" records, indicates that Keraplex is successful in clearing up six out of seven cases of externally caused pimples and blemishes.

What Users Say:

"I was suffering from a severe case of acne... and with only 4 days' treatment with Keraplex... was completely relieved."—P. S.

"I have been completely satisfied with your lotion to help clear up the pimples on my face."—K. W.

"I have been using Keraplex for a severe case of eczema on my hands, knees and elbows. Now my skin is completely clear."—M. B.

Girls often suffer from acne, too. So if you have a sister or friend who needs help, show her this advertisement. She'll be grateful to you later for the kindness you have shown.

Mail the convenient coupon below now, for a bottle of Keraplex. Then use it as directed for a full week. If you don't SEE results that delight you within that time, simply return empty bottle and your money will be refunded at once. Don't delay a single minute. Clip and mail the coupon NOW! Underwood Laboratories, Inc., Dept. 17, Stratford, Conn.

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

UNDERWOOD LABORATORIES, Inc., Dept. 17, STRATFORD, CONN.

Yes! I want to try Keraplex ON APPROVAL. Send size checked below in plain wrapper marked "personal." When it is delivered I will deposit with postman amount indicated below, plus postage. If not delighted with the RESULTS, I will return empty bottle within seven days for a full refund of the purchase price.

☐ Regular Size, \$1.98

☐ Double Quantity (Two Bottles), \$3.50

Name

Address

City Zone State

☐ SAVE POSTAGE. Check here if you ENCLOSE payment. In which case we pay postage. Same money-back Guarantee applies!

Payment must be sent with all orders to be shipped to A.P.O.'s, Canada and foreign countries.

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

and making money without working very hard, or having to learn a trade, or anything like it. 'Learn while you earn,' they say. So people without any talent or experience decide they're going to be authors, and they send in manuscripts."

"Why, I wouldn't give such offerings a second glance," said Al.

"Mostly, we don't," said the Mad Hatter. "But every now and then we'll see something like one of these where, Lord help us, the fellow has a real fine story. We get that feeling in our bones that this writer is going to arrive and if we let him go, someone else will get him first; someone else will spend extra time training him."

"Well," said Al, "at least you don't have that kind of trouble with established writers." He was conscious of three pair of eyes staring at him forlornly. "You mean—regular... name... authors turn in manuscripts like these, too?"



"Some do," said the Dormouse, and the other two nodded. The Dormouse rubbed his eyes again. "We all want to get stories from the big names; after all, the reason why they're big names is because they've made a hit with readers and editors, and their work is in demand. Sometimes a mediocre writer will have a fair amount of success, but usually the 'name author' has a solid record of first class stories behind him. So, if his manuscripts are a mess to read and edit, he can get away with it because none of us want to turn down a fine story—even if we have to murder time doing the author's work for him."

[Turn To Page 88]

NEW AMAZING POWERHOUSE BINOCULARS FROM GERMANY GIVE YOU UP TO 20 MILE RANGE!

9X Area
Magnification!

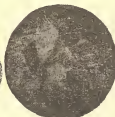
DIRECT
FROM
IMPORTER
TO
YOU

\$4.98
WITH
LEATH-
ER CASE

THIS is what
your eye sees ▶



◀ THIS
is what
you see
with the
POWER-
HOUSE



GENUINE
COATED LENSES!

THORESEN—world's greatest importer of German binoculars—brings you famous, nationally advertised POWERHOUSE BINOCULARS FOR ONLY 4.98! NOT 4...5...7—but 9X AREA MAGNIFICATION! The POWERHOUSE is made in Western Germany—world's outstanding producer of quality optics—and German know-how and superb workmanship are reflected in its many features!

Coated, Precision-Ground Lenses!

POWERHOUSE is manufactured by a 99-year-old firm—the powerful lenses in these glasses are its crowning achievement! NOT moulded plastic kind stamped out by the million... Each objective lens is COATED & polished to high tolerances, then checked for accuracy. This takes much longer, costs 20 to 30 times more! BUT—you get CRYSTAL-CLEAR VIEWING—no excessive distortion or ghost images! Other POWERHOUSE features: Great structural strength without tiring weight. (Only 7½ oz.)... Aluminum center-post-focusing for steady focusing... Beautiful modern design... High luminosity for viewing even by moonlight... Handsome, genuine leather case.

Satisfaction Guaranteed! 5 Day Free Trial!

One look thru the POWERHOUSE will convince you of its superb quality! That's why we want to send one to you on FREE TRIAL for 5 days. Use it to watch football—at the races—travelling—for plane spotting! Then—if you don't think it's a TERRIFIC bargain—return it for FULL REFUND! Only about 100,000 POWERHOUSES can be produced this year, due to high manufacturing standards. To be fair to all, we are forced to limit sales to ONE per reader. Send coupon TODAY and be sure of getting YOUR POWERHOUSE!

THORESEN'S, Dept. 120-M-6
352 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Canadian: order direct—no tariff

Thoresen Co., Dept. 120-M-6, 45 James St., W., Montreal 1, P. Q.



CROSS-SECTION VIEW SHOWS YOU SUPER FEATURES

1. Rugged "Battleship" Construction.
2. Lenses are deep-bedded for extra protection.

3. Note how light is channelled for super viewing.
4. Center focusing gives you 25 possible positions.

RUSH FOR FREE TRIAL!

THORESEN'S, Dept. 120-M-6
352 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y.

RUSH 1 POWERHOUSE with case at 4.98 on
5 Day FREE TRIAL. Money-back Guarantee.

- ☐ 4.98 enclosed. Send all charges prepaid.
☐ Send C.O.D. plus postal charges.

Name

Address

Town State

DRINK

Can Be Conquered! Are any of your dear ones or yourself under the spell of DRINK? If they are and if you believe GOD CAN HELP YOU, send your name and address for full INFORMATION about our wonderful NEW WAY to help you UNDERSTAND and STOP the DRINK HABIT either in one you love or in yourself. What this is doing for others it can as surely do to help YOU! So don't delay! Just clip this message now and mail with your name and address. We will rush our wonderful NEW Message to you by AIR MAIL, absolutely FREE. Hope House, Desk 5212, Noroton, Conn.

SONG POEMS WANTED

TO BE SET TO MUSIC

- ★ Submit one of your best poems for free examination. Any subject. Send poem for details and information.
- ★ Phonograph Records Made
- ★ FIVE STAR MUSIC MASTERS, 660 BEACON BLDG., BOSTON, MASS.

JOBS THAT PAY TO \$1,500 MONTHLY

Thousands of jobs open. S. America, Europe, Africa, USA, etc. Fare paid when hired. Application forms available. All trades, Labor, Drivers, Clerical Engineers, etc. No employment fees! Free Information. Write Dept. 75-G.

National Employment Information Service,
1020 Broad, Newark, N. J.

HOW TO HYPNOTIZE

IT'S EASY TO HYPNOTIZE...

when you know how!



Want the thrill of making someone do exactly what you order? Try hypnotism! This amazing technique gives full personal satisfaction. You'll find it entertaining and gratifying. HOW TO HYPNOTIZE shows all you need to know. It is put so simply, anyone can follow it. And there are 24 revealing photographs for your guidance. Includes complete directions for party and stage hypnotism.

SEND NO MONEY

Ten days' examination of this system is offered to you if you send the coupon today. We will ship you our copy by return mail, in plain wrapper. If not delighted with results, return it in 10 days and your money will be refunded. Stravon Publishers, Dept. H-529, 48 West 61st St., New York 23, N. Y.

MAIL COUPON TODAY!

STRAVON PUBLISHERS, Dept. H-529

48 W. 61st St., N. Y. 23, N. Y.

Send HOW TO HYPNOTIZE in plain wrapper.

☐ Send C.O.D. I will pay postman \$1.96 plus postage.

☐ I enclose \$1.96. Send postpaid.

If not delighted, I may return it in 10 days and get my money back.

Name

Address

City Zone State

Canada & Foreign—\$2.50 with order

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

"But—most of the manuscripts you receive are in readable shape, aren't they?" Al asked.



"The majority are," the March Hare agreed. "And most authors—established authors, that is—aren't too hard to deal with. The real professionals often apologize for very trivial defects in a manuscript."

"What hurts is some of the offerings from tyros who can't do anything but type neatly. Of course, a number of the regulars can afford to hire typists to put their manuscripts in final shape." The Dormouse shook his head sadly. "No, it isn't even stories that aren't good enough that really pain us—the hopeless ones are weeded out before we've really lost any time—but the stories which are good to excellent, but not for us."

"I've heard that expression before," Al admitted. "What do you mean when you say, 'Good—but not for us.'"

THE MAD HATTER started. "You know the title of my magazine. It's *Martian Adventures*; year in, year out, we have delighted our readers with all manner of stories dealing with that endlessly fascinating planet. Every story either takes place on Mars, or near Mars, or is concerned with Martians of various sizes and shapes and temperaments. But you should see the number of manuscripts that come in—neatly typed and properly addressed—containing stories which don't even mention Mars, let alone have a Martian background.

[Turn To Page 90]

NOW! Amazing New Keratone May... MAKE YOUR HAIR LAST A LIFETIME



Note to Doctors

Doctors, clinics, hospitals engaged in clinical work on scalp disorders are invited to write for professional literature and samples of the new Keratone Formula Series.

First, let's understand a few facts about hair growth and baldness. Common baldness follows a characteristic pattern. The hair recedes at the temples and there is a gradual loss of hair at the crown of the head. Hair lost in this manner is progressive and, if unchecked, the end result is baldness.

You may have seen ads with "before and after" photographs of men and women enjoying renewed hair growth. These photographs are probably authentic. But the next time you pick up one of these ads observe it carefully. Note that the baldness areas do not follow the characteristic pattern of common baldness. Note that the bald spots are not on the crown or at the temples. Instead, they are almost on any other part of the head — the back of the head, the side of the head — places where most people still retain hair after many years of being bald. These people were suffering from a scalp disorder called alopecia areata, which means loss of hair in patches. In these cases the hair falls out in clumps practically overnight, and grows back the same way after weeks, months, or years later. Doctors don't know the cause of alopecia areata but believe it results from a nervous disturbance.

At any rate, the chances are 98 to 1 that you do not have alopecia areata.

NOW YOU CAN STOP WORRYING ABOUT BALDNESS

Now we can clear the air. Up to this time no one has discovered how to GROW HAIR ON A BALD HEAD. So, if you are already bald, make up your mind you are going to stay that way. Quit worrying about it — enjoy yourself.

But if you are beginning to notice that your forehead is getting larger in area, beginning to notice that there is too much hair on your comb, beginning to be worried about the dryness of your hair, the itchiness of your scalp, the ugly dandruff — these are Nature's Red Flags, warning you of impending baldness. Even if you have been losing your hair for some time, and the remaining hairs are thin, downy in texture, as long as your scalp does not

Vitamin A to the scalp, which, according to many medical authorities, may be an essential growth factor to the hair follicles. (2) As a highly effective antiseptic, Keratone kills on contact all the seborrhea-causing scalp bacteria believed to be a major cause of baldness. By its keratolitic action it dissolves ugly dandruff, it controls seborrhea, thereby tending to normalize the lubrication of the hair shaft, and eliminating head scales and scalp itch. In short, Keratone combines in a single effective treatment all that modern science has developed for the preservation of your hair.

Today there is no longer any excuse for any man or woman to be resigned to future baldness. After years of extensive research and experimentation, we can say this about Keratone. We know of no other treatment, used at home or in professional salons, that can surpass Keratone in saving your hair and encouraging still-alive hair follicles into NORMAL HAIR GROWTH.

KERATONE IS UNCONDITIONALLY GUARANTEED

Therefore, we offer you this UNCONDITIONAL GUARANTEE. Try Keratone in your own home, carefully following the simple directions enclosed with each shipment. In only 10 days your hair must look thicker, more attractive and alive. Your dandruff must be gone, your irritating scalp itch must stop. In only 20 days you must see the remarkable improvement in your scalp condition, and the continued improvement in the appearance of your hair. After 30 days you must be completely satisfied with the rapid progress in the condition of your hair and scalp, or return the unused portion of the treatment and we will refund the entire purchase price immediately.

You now have the opportunity to help make your hair last a lifetime — at no risk.

So don't delay. Nothing — not even Keratone — can grow hair from dead follicles. Fill out the coupon below, while you have this chance to enjoy thicker — stronger — healthier HAIR AGAIN.

©1970 THE KERATONE CO., INC., 22 West 44th Street, New York 36, N. Y.

have the shiny skin-clean look of baldness, there is now something you can do to help make your hair last a lifetime.

The development of the amazing new formula series called Keratone may mean that thousands of men and women can now increase the life expectancy of their hair. Keratone has two basic formulas with the double purpose of trying to save the hair you now have, and to stimulate still-alive hair follicles to renewed hair growth.

HOW KERATONE WORKS ON YOUR SCALP

This is how Keratone works: (1) It combines in a single scalp treatment the essential active factors for normal hair growth. It tends to promote the multiplication of the germinative cells which create and renew not only the outer scalp tissues but the hair itself. By its rubefacient action it stimulates blood circulation to the scalp, thereby supplying more nutrition to still-alive hair follicles. It supplies

BALDNESS WON'T WAIT! ACT NOW!

The KERATONE CO., Inc., 22 West 44th Street, New York 36, N. Y. Please send at once the complete Keratone hair and scalp treatment (50 days' supply) in plain wrapper. I must be completely satisfied with the results of the treatment, or you GUARANTEE prompt and full refund upon return of unused portion of treatment.

☐ Enclosed find \$10 (Cash, check, money order) Send postpaid
☐ Send C.O.D. I will pay postman \$10 plus postage charges on delivery.

Name

Address

City Zone State

RUSH THIS NO-RISK COUPON TODAY!

OWN a Business

If employed, start part time. Alert dealers can gross \$5 hourly profit plus \$3 on EACH serviceman. Clean, revive, mothproof rugs and upholstery on location. No shop needed. We locally train and assist you. Nationally advertised. World-wide service. Quickly established. Easy terms. Send today for FREE booklet. No obligation. Duracolor Co., 671 Duracolor Bldg., Deerfield, Ill.



IT'S A HIT!

Now for the first time we are able to offer you GOLD and SILVER MAGNETIC LODESTONES, said to bring GOOD LUCK in LOVE, MONEY and GAMES OF CHANCE and to CHASE EVIL, BAD LUCK and JINXES. We sell them as curios only. No supernatural claims made. With every pair of GENUINE GOLD and SILVER LODESTONES, you will send you FREE of extra charge, a SPECIAL RED FLANNEL CARRYING BAG and a so-called GOOD-LUCK REAL ONLY \$1.98 for all four items SEND NO MONEY. Just pay postman \$1.98 plus to please you or your money back. Rate postage by sending \$2 in cash or money order. Same Guarantee. ACT FAST. SUPPLY LIMITED. Surprise Gift With Every Order.

postage. GUARANTEED
Rate postage by sending \$2 in cash or money order. Same Guarantee. ACT FAST. SUPPLY LIMITED. Surprise Gift With Every Order.

BEATTY'S, Dept. A-3802, Box 408, Mineola, N. Y.

**MEN
PAST
40**

tells how you may correct these conditions and have new health and Zest in Life. Write today. No Obligation.

Excelsior Institute, Dept. 9291, Excelsior Springs, Mo.

STOP TOBACCO



Banish the craving for tobacco as thousands have with Tobacco Reformer. Write today for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and of a treatment which has relieved over 300,000 people.

In Business Since 1909
THE NEWELL COMPANY
266 Clayton St. • St. Louis 8, Mo.

**FREE
BOOK**

Regular Price of a
Slide Rule \$4 and up



Slide Rule

92c

If you know how to use a pencil you can use a slide rule. Add 5c Postage. For bookkeepers, accountants, salesmen (figuring commissions, cost, etc.), farmers, housewives, etc. For Armed Forces highly important. Men's most useful tool. Easy to calculate instantly. Multiplying, proportions, division, extracting roots, etc. "High Vision" Clear View Slide, Full 10" Rule, A, B, C, D, E, F and K scales. FREE 28-page instruction book on how to get correct answers instantly without pencil or paper.

Gene Leowy, 545 5th Ave., N. Y. 17

Dept. 53-R Limit three rules to each coupon

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

The March Hare shook his head and sighed. "True, how true. Now my magazine is titled, *Tomorrow's Tidings*, and year after year, we've transported our readers into the future—near or far—in every story. You should see the number of tales we get which take place in the present or in the past."

The Dormouse's eyes were closed, but it mumbled distinctly, "At *True Science Stories*, we always take care that the scientific background of our stories is as accurate as present-day knowledge and theory will allow. We extrapolate, and we speculate, and we spin webs of fancy. But we insist that when something is stated as fact or probability that it doesn't contradict what is established or accepted—unless the author can account for his different notions with a theory that explains present knowledge and opinion as well as current theories. Yet—and we have been doing this for decades—you should see the number of stories we get where Venus is called a jungle planet; where people just like Earthmen roam around on Mars without any protection; where extra-terrestrials from the stars arrive on Earth speaking English—I could go on like this for hours, days, weeks."



"Well," agreed Al, "I suppose this is very annoying; but after all, everyone hasn't read your magazines as long as you have, and maybe a lot of writers don't know..."

[Turn To Page 92]

MEN 17-45 WANTED!

TO TRAIN FOR TELEVISION

One of America's Foremost Television Training centers is seeking men who would like to prepare for a good technical job or profitable business of their own in the fast-growing, big opportunity field of Television, Radio and Electronics. Technically inclined men 17 to 45 preferred. You may prepare to enter this billion dollar industry in the privacy of your own home in your spare time. Wonderfully effective method. Get full facts, without obligation. Mail a postal card, saying: "Tell me about Television." ACT TODAY—DON'T DELAY!—

Dept. No. DAG-21

DEVRY TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

4141 Belmont Avenue, Chicago 41, Illinois

IT MAY WORK MIRACLES FOR YOU-NOW...

If life passes you by, if you can't overcome EVIL SPIRITS, if you have BAD LUCK, if you FAIL in love, feel LET DOWN and people are AGAINST you, THEN you need this 24K GOLD PLATED HOLY MIRACLE CROSS, encrusted with beautiful SIMULATED DIAMONDS and fully ENCLOSED in GLASS. Can be used in the secrecy of your home. It is said that people swear by it and BLESS the day that they bought it. Don't be afraid to let it work for you. 100% guaranteed or your money back in 7 days. ONLY \$2.00 money with order OR \$2.50 C.O.D. GET STARTED on the right road today...



FREE WITH EVERY ORDER, A VIAL OF HOLY MIRACLE ANOINTING LIQUID. FULL DIRECTIONS.
TWINZ, 125 Broad St., N.Y. 4, N.Y. Dept. DO-6

PRAYER

Is a Tremendous Mighty Power! Are you facing difficult Problems? Poor Health? Money or Job Trouble? Love or Family Troubles? Worried? Drink? Unhappiness of any kind? Would you like more Happiness, Success, and "Good Fortune" in Life? Here is wonderful NEWS of a remarkable NEW WAY of PRAYER that is helping thousands to glorious NEW happiness and joy! Just clip this Message now and mail with your name, address and 3¢ stamp to LIFE-STUDY FELLOWSHIP, Box 6201, Noroton, Conn. We will rush this wonderful NEW Message of PRAYER and FAITH to you by AIR MAIL absolutely FREE!

PLAY GUITAR IN 7 DAYS OR GET MONEY BACK

Let Ed Sale, top Radio Guitarist, teach you to play 5 songs the very first day, and any song by ear or note in 7 days! His famous book contains 52 photos, 87 chord charts, etc. Shows how to tune, keep time, build chords, bass runs, dance chords, etc., etc., plus 110 Popular Songs, words and music. Surprise friends, relatives. Popularity and fun galore. SEND NO MONEY! Just name and address to Ed Sale and pay postman \$1.98 plus C.O.D. postage for send \$2 with order and I pay postage. Same guarantee.

ED SALE Studio 3611 BRADLEY BEACH, N. J.

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

The three all nodded vigorously. "Don't know their business. Yes, that is it in a nutshell, young man. If you went into a store, for a pair of socks, which you needed right away, and the clerk didn't seem to know what you were talking about; or didn't know whether he carried socks or not; or couldn't find the socks, and started to give you a sales talk on shaving soap instead, would you think very much of that store?"



"I might think the clerk was new, and hadn't been broken in yet," Al suggested dubiously.

"And if the next time you went in, still wanting socks, he tried to sell you sugar sticks instead—or something else that begins with an 's'."

"Why an 's'?" Al wanted to know.

"Why not?" replied the Dormouse. "That seems to be the way such logic goes. Our magazine publish stories, so people send us stories, expecting them to be considered seriously whether they've bothered to find out what *kind* of stories we use or not."

"They're selling a product," said the Mad Hatter. "Very well, but you can see that we're looking for our own particular type of product. With me, it's Martian stories, and it doesn't make any difference how good a Mercurian or moon story someone sends me—I can't use it. Now if I spend a large percentage of my time looking over stories that turn out not to be Martian stories, then I have to rush through the pile of Martian stories offered me in order to make my deadline..."

"Not to miss the deadline, that is the law," chanted the others.

"...so although there may be an excellent Martian story in the next pile, I'll have to accept the best I can

IT SAYS HERE

find in *this* pile, because time's running out, and I've lost too much of it sorting out the Mercurian stories."

"And I lose time weeding out the science fiction of today and tales of lost Atlantis," said the March Hare.

The Dormouse said nothing. "He's asleep again," the March Hare announced. He nodded to the Mad Hatter, and the two of them cried, "*Dead-line!*" at the top of their voices. Al thought it wasn't very kind of them.

WELL, that gives you a faint idea of the situation; authors waste countless of man-hours of editorial time by sending in the wrong kind of good stories, or good stories presented in such a manner as to require undue work on the copy—work the author should have done himself.

In the last issue, we discussed some of the major bars between potential and actual editorial performance. The matters we've talked about this time are minor; they can be used, legitimately, as an alibi once in a while—but certainly not as a running excuse. But they're the constant irritation, the grain of sand in the editorial shoe which wears the editor down more surely than all the other hurdles. That is why almost any editor will harp on these points so consistently, and why his voice may take a petulant tone at times.

It's not much fun when someone expects you to play ball with them—only they haven't bothered to learn the rules of the game. RWL

Letters

SPACECRAFT SPECULATION, ETC.

by Harold W. Miller

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

If this is printed, no doubt I will astound my readers.

[Turn Page]

To People who want to write but can't get started

Do you have that constant urge to write but fear that a beginner hasn't a chance? Then listen to what the former editor of *Liberty* said on this subject:

"There is more room for newcomers in the writing field today than ever before. Some of the greatest of writing men and women have passed from the scene. Who will take their places? Fame, riches and the happiness of achievement await the new men and women of power."



GIVES CREDIT TO N.I.A. FOR WRITING SUCCESS

"Since taking the N.I.A. Course, I have written 14 articles. Eleven have been accepted and I expect to sell the others shortly. The guidance I have received from N.I.A. is responsible for most of the success I have had. I found the Course clear, comprehensive and easy to absorb."—Mr. Charles K. Walton, 21 Willard Ave., Ottawa, Ontario.

Writing Aptitude Test — FREE!

THE Newspaper Institute of America offers a **FREE** Writing Aptitude Test. Its object is to discover new recruits for the army of men and women who add to their income by fiction and article writing. The Writing Aptitude Test is a simple but expert analysis of your latent ability, your powers of imagination, logic, etc. Not all applicants pass this test. Those who do are qualified to take the famous N.I.A. course based on the practical training given by big metropolitan dailies.

This is the New York Copy Desk Method which teaches you to write by writing. You develop your individual style instead of trying to copy that of others. Although you work at home, on your own time, you are constantly guided by experienced writers. You "cover" actual assignments such as metropolitan reporters get. It is really fascinating work. Each week you see new progress. In a matter of months you can acquire the coveted "professional" touch. Then you are ready for market with greatly improved chances of making sales.

Mail the Coupon NOW

But the first step is to take the **FREE** Writing Aptitude Test. It requires but a few minutes and costs nothing. So mail the coupon now. Make the first move towards the most enjoyable and profitable occupation — writing for publication! Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Ave., New York 16, N.Y. (Founded 1925)

(Licensed by State of New York)

Free

Newspaper Institute Of America
One Park Ave., New York 16, N.Y.

Send me without cost or obligation,
your free Writing Aptitude Test and further
information about writing for profit.

Mrs. }
Mr. }
Miss }
Address

City Zone State

(All correspondence confidential. No salesmen will call on you.)

☐ Check here if Veteran. 31-13-065

Copyright 1955 Newspaper Institute of America.

FREE FOR ASTHMA

If you suffer with attacks of Asthma and choke and gasp for breath, if restful sleep is difficult because of the struggle to breathe, don't fail to send at once to the Frontier Asthma Company for a FREE trial of the FRONTIER ASTHMA MEDICINE, a preparation for temporary symptomatic relief of paroxysms of Bronchial Asthma. No matter where you live or whether you have faith in any medicine under the sun, send today for this free trial. It will cost you nothing.

FRONTIER ASTHMA CO. 761W FRONTIER BLDG.
462 NIAGARA ST. BUFFALO 1, N. Y.

Do YOU want to CHANGE YOUR LUCK?



Is Bad Luck Chasing YOU? Making everything you do go wrong? Do others get all the GOOD LUCK, while you get nothing? Don't give up. No matter how bad YOUR LUCK has been, I know that Genuine LUCKY GREEN can HELP YOU. One woman told me this just the other day, "Your Genuine LUCKY GREEN INFORMATION has helped me to catch

GOOD LUCK almost every day." If you really want to get Genuine LUCKY GREEN INFORMATION, send me your name and address. When the postman delivers YOUR Genuine LUCKY GREEN INFORMATION and PERFUME, deposit just \$2 (3 for just \$5) plus postage and handling on my SINCERE GUARANTEE. Follow the Directions for just 10 days. IF YOU don't say that this is the BEST INFORMATION and Perfume you ever got, I'll return your \$2. Don't let anything hold YOU back. Send for YOUR Genuine LUCKY GREEN now.

LUCKY CLOVER, Dept. 330C, LYNBROOK, N. Y.

How I Gave Up Smoking

by H. L. Green

(Tonkers N. Y.)

"I wanted to laugh when my wife handed me the book *How You Can Stop Smoking*. But to avoid argument, I started turning the pages. To my amazement, I became interested.

"The first section, *The Medical Case Against Smoking*, gave me a startling picture of what smoking does to the lungs, heart, stomach, etc. Where it does not kill or disable outright, it lowers efficiency, cuts down endurance, spoils coordination, saps menly vigor and makes you nervous. No wonder athletes don't smoke! By the time I'd finished this part, the idea of smoking had become pretty distasteful.

"Reading on, I discovered how insidiously the habit had gripped every waking moment of my life. But now I had both a reason and a way to make a break. Following the practical step-by-step suggestions proved easy—no strain on the will power. In a week I was through with tobacco and I felt like a new man."

Order *How You Can Stop Smoking* direct. Send \$1.98 and save postage. Or pay postman \$1.98 plus postage. Money-back guarantee.

PLAZA BOOK CO. Dept. W 572

109 Broad Street, New York 4, N. Y.

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

First, rocket driven spacecraft can never travel through space, as we know it!

Consider rocket principle. Their motion is attained by exhaust gasses thrusting against an atmosphere, which on Earth, is air. As a result, jets are not feasible either, for this same agency, atmosphere, is necessary for operation.

We know, high altitudes above Earth hold very little air. Fliers need oxygen masks to pilot their planes. By this method, only, can our planes climb to heights which are very puny, compared to spaceflight!

However obvious, this brings up a point—at altitudes, where atmosphere ceases to exist, rockets would cease to function as a motive force. With internal reservoirs of oxygen, and other fuels, they could continue to fire, as long as the fuel held out, but excepting for the pretty lights they would make, of what avail would they be?

Our science experts state that an "escape velocity", (the power needed to travel beyond gravity-limits of Earth), should be 25,000 MPH. No living person could survive such an initial acceleration, from a standing start!

Now for some "debunking".

Except for theory, who can prove there "is" a gravity limit on Earth? In other words, who can prove Earth has a gravity?

Suppose we accept material weight for a substitute. It would be more plausible. Does so-called gravity control the rise of smoke, fumes, etc? These have no weight factor to be controlled by gravity. The reason lighter-than-air items, articles, entities, etc., do not rise beyond Earth's atmosphere is simple. Absolutely nothing moves through an airless medium, after an initial momentum has been expended, with one exception.

It is highly probable that all planets are held in their orbits, by gravity pull from the Sun, but highly improbable for any particular planet, such as Earth, to have a gravity pull of its own. So the Sun's influence on planets, is the one exception.

To further de-bunk space dreamers' plans, does anyone take the Bible lightly?

The Bible states, man's life span is three score and ten years. To see what relation this fact bears toward light-year distances, I submit the following route of conversion.

We "accept" Science's word, on the speed of light. By mathematical procedure, we arrive at the fantastic speed of 5,865,696,000,000 MPH, or one light year!

Suppose a given planet is a mere ten light years distant from Earth, if we "could" travel at one light year per hour, ten hours would see the completion of our goal. But! Will man ever travel this velocity? Whatever actual speed he "does" ever attain, if the figure could only be known now, we could divide it into the speed of one light year, multiply by the number of light years distance to a planet, then try to calculate whether our life span could be ade-

[Turn To Page 96]

MAKE EXTRA MONEY!!

Spare time work at home. Big mail-order firm needs men and women to send out postcards. Easy! No experience necessary. Just address and mail. Steady work every month. Act now—write at once.

BUSINESS INFORMATION CORPORATION
143 Belmont Street, Belmont, Mass.

Lovely used DRESSES



The biggest bargains we have ever offered. Prints, solids, rayons, cottons, etc. Assorted styles and colors. Sizes 10 to 18. 10 for \$4.95. Larger sizes 6 for \$4.95. Some of these dresses are worth up to \$30.00 when new. Send \$1 deposit, balance C.O.D. plus postage. Your \$4.95 refunded if dissatisfied, or merchandise exchanged, if desired. Many other clothing bargains for entire family.

10 for 495

POSTCARD BRINGS FREE CATALOG

Buy with confidence at
ALLIED MAIL ORDER CO., INC. Dept. 107-P
192 CHRISTOPHER AVE., BROOKLYN 12, N. Y.

EXPERT DICE



CARDS, INKS, etc.

STRONG! RELIABLE!
FREE CATALOGUE
Send for it today!

O. C. Novelty Company, Dept. 5
1311 W. Main Oklahoma City 4, Okla.

YOU MAY
EARN OVER
\$25.00
WEEKLY

Address & Mail
Postcards at Home
WRITE
- **ATLAS** -
BOX 188 Dept. 17
MELROSE, MASS.

MEN MIDDLE AGED!

Frequently Are Tired—Worn
Out—Suffer Aches, Pains,
Urinary Trouble and
Loss of Vitality.

These symptoms may be caused by Glandular Inflammation. The Kansas City Clinic has just published a new free booklet describing more fully the symptoms of Glandular diseases. Write for your **FREE BOOKLET** that tells about a mild treatment. It may save you years of suffering. Write today:
Address Desk C-9

The Kansas City Clinic
920 Oak St., Kansas City 6, Mo.

"How I Became A Hotel Hostess"



Mrs. Harriet Kent Becomes Hostess-Housekeeper Though Without Previous Hotel Experience

"Realizing that one day I'd have to make my own way, I decided nothing offered a more fascinating future than the hotel field. I enrolled for Lewis Training. With one-fifth of the course uncompleted, I suddenly had to find a position. I applied for the Hostess-Housekeeper's position at this hotel. They took me without previous experience, thanks to Lewis Training."

"How I Stepped Into a BIG PAY Hotel Job"

Melvin I. Dalrymple Becomes Assistant Manager As A Result of Lewis Training

"Every person desiring to win success in the hotel field should enroll for the Lewis Course. It taught me about all 'round hotel departmental operations qualifying me for the important position of Assistant Manager of a big hotel faster than I ever dreamed possible. Anyone can do what I have done with the wonderful training the Lewis School gives."



STEP INTO A WELL-PAID HOTEL POSITION

Important positions, increasing opportunities await trained man and women in glamorous hotel, motel, club, and institutional field. Lewis graduates "making good" as hostesses, managers, executive housekeepers and 55 other well-paid positions. Previous experience proved unnecessary. "Over 40" no obstacle. Lewis Training quickly qualifies you at home in leisure time or through resident classes in Washington. FREE book describes this fascinating field. It tells how you are registered FREE in Lewis National Placement Service. Mail coupon today!

Approved for ALL Veteran Training

LEWIS HOTEL TRAINING SCHOOL **39** SUCCESSFUL YEARS
Room AB-2961, Washington 7, D. C.
Send me, without obligation, your Free Book. I want to know how to qualify for a well-paid position.
☐ Resident Training ☐ Home Study

Name
PLEASE PRINT NAME AND ADDRESS
Address
City Zone State
☐ Check here if eligible for Veteran Training

Nasal Congestion Associated With Head
Colds May Cause Symptoms Of

SINUS

ASTHMA, HAY FEVER.

Amazing New Treatment — FREE TRIAL

Thousands have received amazing, fast relief with this sensational, new treatment, from symptoms of hay fever, asthma, sinus headaches, pressure in forehead, soreness in eyes, cheek bones, top of head, back of head and down neck, when caused by nasal congestion. Write for 5 DAY FREE TRIAL, POSTPAID, no cost or obligation to try it except; it is agreed you will mail it back, postpaid at end of trial period if not amazed with results. Dept. S-25 ...

National Laboratories, Gaith, California
Offer not good in California



GIRLS

GET YOUR MAN

and make him yours FOREVER. Why take chances against other women who may be using mysterious charms? Here is your chance to learn and use Secrets of Sex Appeal so powerful that even bad women can keep good men while good girls go without.

HOW TO WIN AND HOLD A HUSBAND contains the very essence of confidential advice that a great Love and Marriage Expert has given to thousands of women—all reduced to a simple set of rules—an easy formula that you can learn to use to WIN YOUR MAN. 10-DAY TRIAL—Just send your name and address today and on delivery deposit only \$2 plus postage with your postman. (Or send \$2 with order to save C.O.D. and postage.) Use for 10 days. I positively GUARANTEE that you will be more than delighted or your money back promptly and no questions asked. Order At Once. LARCH, 118 East 28, Dept. 441-D, New York 16

SONGWRITERS
YOUR SONGS
PUBLISHED
\$1200.00 ADVANCE ROYALTY
Up to you

COMPLETE SONG WRITING SERVICE

We write the music for your words without charge on 60-60 basis. We send you records, copies and copyright your song for you in Washington, D. C.

GUARANTEED PUBLICATION

We guarantee the publication of at least two songs each month by a legitimate B.M.I. music publisher. The writers receive advance royalty and a standard royalty contract. The publisher pays all publication expenses.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHANCES?

If you have ability your chances are good. Now song-writers become famous every year. Maybe this is YOUR year. Publishers are constantly on the lookout for good songs. Turn your material over to a firm whose business is SONGWRITING.

WRITE TODAY

SEND YOUR POEM or lyric today for free examination and complete information on our exceptional offer.
Dept. P, 1609 Vista Del Mar, Hollywood 28, Calif.

HOLLYWOOD TUNESMITHS

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

quate for our needs. It's quite a thought for anyone to embrace.

I've written several SF stories, but I always write in a fairy-tale manner. I could never cope with reality, or facts, which I have written in this letter. Science is one thing, and the Bible is another, but the Bible was here first!

— 8½ N. Park Place Newark, Ohio

Experiments have shown that the rocket-thrust principle operates *better* in a near-vacuum—such as exists between planets—than it does here on Earth. How come? You have to look at it from a different angle; you have to ask, "Why does an object slow down and come to rest, once it has been set in motion?"

There are two main factors (a) friction and the resistance of the medium through which, or upon which, the object is traveling, and (b) gravity. The condition of near-vacuum means virtually no friction or resistance to hold the rocket back when fired, or to slow the rocket down after it has been fired. Gravity is the main element here on Earth; but gravity is likely more to influence the direction in which a rocket travels in space than the speed at which it is traveling.

I don't think anyone expects a craft to attain "escape velocity" in one thrust; whether your figures are exactly right or not, I agree that such an initial thrust would be thoroughly fatal under conditions known or achieved in 1954.

Beyond this point in your letter, I'm not exactly sure I follow you.

DEPARTMENTS DESIRED

by Martin Schellenberg

Dear Editor:

I'm not one of those peculiar people who buy your magazine or any other magazine for the departments alone. As a matter of fact, I've given up reading a couple of science fiction magazines whose departments I liked very much—the stories just got too ridiculous. So I hope you'll believe me when I tell you that I'd like SFQ still more if you'd put back "Readin' and With-

[Turn To Page 98]

LADIES' 20 DRESSES FOR \$3.50

BIG DRESS SALE

ASSORTED in Silk, Wool,
Cotton & Rayon

ALL SIZES in Good Condition
BUT NO LESS THAN 20 DRESSES
AT THIS BARGAIN PRICE

Ladies' BLOUSES

39c each
5 for \$1.69

Assorted col-
ors and styles
in Silks, Cre-
pes, Rayons
Acetates

FREE!

With \$1.00 Order or More
1 Pair of Ladies' Hose
MONEY BACK IF NOT
SATISFIED \$1.00 Deposit
MUST come with order. You
pay postman balance plus
COD and postage charges
NO ORDER ACCEPTED
FOR LESS THAN \$1.00. A
TRIAL ORDER WILL
CONVINCE YOU OF OUR
WONDERFUL BARGAINS

Ladies' SKIRTS

69c each
3 for \$1.79

Full assortment
of colors and
styles All
Wools, plaids
and Mixtures

QUILT PIECES

3 lbs. \$1.49

Large bundle
of beautiful
new cotton
prints, checks,
stripes and
solids. All
good size cuttings

Ladies' SHOES

99c pair
3 for \$2.69

Good quality
Leathers and
Fabrics
WILL GIVE MANY
MONTHS OF GOOD
WEAR

Ladies' SLIPS

49c each
5 for \$2.29

Beautiful
well tailored
slips that really
give you value
for your
money

ORDER NOW

Ladies' Winter COATS

\$1.89 each
2 for \$3.59

All sizes with
or without fur
collars. These
are in excellent
condition,
slight repairs
needed

Ladies' COATS & TOPPERS

\$1.29 each
2 for \$2.39

Best Buttons
in fine wool
materials
Need slight
repairs. For best
selection order
at once

RUMMAGE

20 Pieces
for \$2.19

Used items for
every member
of the family,
consisting of
Rayon Under-
wear, Children's
Wear and other
articles

Ladies' SWEATERS

99c each
3 for \$2.69

Many styles
and patterns
in short and
long sleeves
Various
colors

ORDER NOW
FOR BEST SELECTION

RUSH YOUR ORDER TODAY!

MAIL ORDER MART Dept. DA-2
199 Sackett St. Bklyn. 31, N.Y.

Please send me the following items, \$1.00 deposit
enclosed.

ITEM	SIZE	PRICE

☐ Give Hose size - if Order is \$5.00 or more.

Name

Address

City

State

No Order accepted without \$1.00 deposit.
Canada & Foreign - Full Payment with Order.

in'" and "Inside Science Fiction".

While I like Damon Knight's reviews best, I don't think it hurts to have someone else like L. Sprague de Camp to change the pace now and then; and of course I'd like to see your own book comments. What happened to them, by the way?

"Inside Science Fiction" is all right and I like the way Madle handles it, except for one thing. I wasn't reading science fiction twenty years ago, and I doubt that I'll ever get hold of the magazines he's talking about in the "Twenty Years Ago in Science Fiction" section—I doubt that I'd find them interesting enough. It seems to me that most of the best stories from the old days must have been printed in anthologies, collections, or in novel form by now—or are about to come out that way. After all, real honestagawd classics in any art form are comparatively rare: I find it hard to accept a statement that science fiction has produced more than 6 in thirty to fifty years. More than 6! What am I saying? I doubt that there have been as many as 6 from the very beginning, of science fiction—excluding the works which were considered "Classics" before anyone thought of tagging them "science fiction".

—Brooklyn, New York

There's no doubt but that the worth of many enjoyable stories has been grossly exaggerated. A good deal of the reason for this lies in the fact that many of those who praise numerous stories which don't stand re-examination too well, were quite young, very impressionable, and hardly equipped to make valid literary judgments, when these tales first appeared. The term "classic", of course, has by now come to signify little more than an advertising come-on—a deplorable fact, but fact nonetheless in this age of genuine simulated imitations.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

by Murray King

Dear RWL:

Referring to "analogistic and other pre-scientific methods of thought for everyday affairs", L. Sprague de Camp notes that "So far they had proved adequate for the continuation of the species. A method that works most of the time, and can be

used by everybody, is a better survival factor than a method that works all the time, but can be used only one man in fifty."

I just wonder if even the "one man in fifty", assuming that he is willing to try to use the scientific method throughout everyday affairs and has the necessary background, is going to be able to do so. Now unless my comprehension of it is mistaken, exact measurements are essential to it; these lead to formulations and formulas, which, if correct, will enable the user to predict *how the use will work* with 100% accuracy. (Further assuming that the formulas are carried out correctly.)

But just take a simple (or rather, familiar, because it's anything but simple) matter of dealing with other human beings—people you know fairly well, let us say. First of all, we don't have *exact* measurements on our own personalities, let alone those of other people; outside of obvious charlatans, etc., I do not know of any psycho-therapists who claim to be able to predict a man's behaviour with anything like 100% accuracy. They'll say that since he's got such and such general type of behaviour pattern, he seems to be more likely to get involved in this kind of situation than that one; and under such and such type of conditions, he's more likely to react this way than that way—and he's pretty nearly incapable of reacting the next way.

So a person goes to the above type of psychotherapist, sticks with him for as long as the therapist thinks is beneficial, then comes out saying, "It works! I'm a new person!" Well, maybe he is "new" in a way; maybe he's learned a great deal about his areas of strength and helplessness and maybe the latter has been alleviated somewhat. But, as was asked in the great dianetics debate, *what worked?*

So, to get back from the diversion, considering how inexact—or at least incomplete—our measurements are when it comes to human relationships, how can even one man in fifty hope to use the scientific method in his everyday life. And, supposing he does try, and that somehow things seem to go as he wants them to, is anyone else—let alone our principal—going to have any real idea as to just what it was that was working 100%?

—Greenwich, Conn.

Don't ask me, Murray; I just work here...that is...

★

Don't Miss

CITY OF GLASS

see page 47

RESTORE YOUR CAR PERFORMANCE

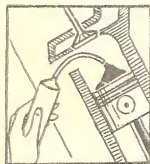
CAR LOST IT'S PEP? BURNING OIL?

Amazing New Method Lets You Restore Car Performance In a Few Minutes.
No Mechanic Needed—You Pay Nothing For Gadgets or Mechanical Repairs.

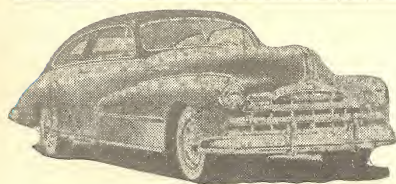
Cars over 3 years old that have gone over 25-30,000 miles are not what they used to be. Your car probably uses too much oil, lacks power, is hard to start, is slow on the pickup, uses too much gasoline. You've probably guessed the reason. The pistons just don't fit the cylinders like they used to—Friction has worn the cylinder walls and pistons so that the rings can no longer fully seal. You are losing compression and power each time a cylinder fires. Gas is leaking into the crankcase oil to undermine its lubricating powers, oil is passing up into the cylinders to be burned into performance killing carbon deposits.

SAVE UP TO \$150

Now, if this is the situation you are in for an overhaul job costing somewhere between \$50 and \$150 UNLESS—Yes, there is an alternative. You can fix that leaky engine in a few minutes, without buying a single part or gadget, and at a cost so low you'll hardly notice it. You just squeeze a little PEPGO Ring Seal into each cylinder through the spark plug openings, replace the plugs and idle the engine and you are finished. PEPGO coats the cylinder walls and pistons with a unique mineral suspension which has this truly amazing power. When subjected to the high heat of the engine this mineral expands up to 30 times its original volume to fill those gaps between the rings and cylinder walls with a pliable resilient and lubricating seal that holds compression, stops oil pumping, and gas blowing. Gone is piston slapping, engine knocks. Compression is restored and with it comes more pep and power, easier starting, better mileage and lower oil consumption.



Regularly \$4.45 only **2.98** Regular Size



WORN OUT ENGINES RUN LIKE NEW

TEST #1

A 1945 "Dodge" 6 cylinder truck had been driven over 100,000 miles without overhaul and was using over a quart of oil every 100 miles. Rated compression of engine when new was 110 lbs. After one PEPGO RING SEAL treatment average cylinder compression now was raised over 40% from 76 to 107 lbs. Oil consumption was greatly reduced and gasoline mileage increased.

Compression Readings—1945 Dodge Truck

	Cylinder 1	Cylinder 2	Cylinder 3	Cylinder 4	Cylinder 5	Cylinder 6
Before	87 lbs.	75 lbs.	60 lbs.	75 lbs.	85 lbs.	118 lbs.
After	100 lbs.	110 lbs.	115 lbs.	95 lbs.	105 lbs.	118 lbs.

This is the testimony of the experts. Now read what just one of the many, many satisfied users have said.

"PEPGO RING SEAL WORTH MANY TIMES THE PRICE."

"I cannot tell you how pleased I am with the results PEPgo Ring Seal has given in my 1947 Cadillac. Previous to treatment my car used one quart of oil every 250 miles. Now the car uses less than a quart of oil every thousand miles. I have also noticed a real increase in power and gas mileage since the treatment. I have now driven over 3000 miles since the PEPgo Ring Seal application and continue to get the same good results. Apart from the savings in oil and gas I found PEPgo Ring Seal worth many times the price because it restored the original power of my car. Please send me two new tubes of PEPgo Ring Seal for use in my 1950 Oldsmobile."
C.S.R., Chestnut Hill, Pa.

30 DAY FREE TRIAL—SEND NO MONEY

You risk nothing. Just fill in the coupon below and we will rush your PEPGO RING SEAL kit together with full Instructions anyone can easily follow by return mail. Just a few easy, pleasurable minutes later your car will begin to operate in a manner that will truly amaze you. Run your car after the PEPGO treatment for a full 30 days. If you are not completely delighted with the results, if your car doesn't run quieter, smoother, with more pep and pickup, less oil and gas consumption then just return the empty tubes for prompt refund of the full purchase price. We stand behind the product. We guarantee—fully satisfactory results, or your money back. 6 cylinder cars require one tube—only \$2.98, 8 cylinder cars 2 tubes—only \$4.98. This is a special offer. PEPGO sold before for \$4.45 per tube. So rush coupon today.

TEST #2

Engine Compression Completely Restored in 1948 Pontiac
A 1948 Pontiac "8" had been driven over 77,000 miles without overhaul and was consuming a quart of oil every 200 to 300 miles. Rated compression for this engine when new was 120 lbs. After one PEPGO RING SEAL Treatment average cylinder compression was increased from 107 lbs. to 120 lbs. or equal to factory standards when new. The car now exhibited exceptional pep and pickup on mountains. Oil consumption was more than cut in half. Gasoline mileage was increased more than 20%.

Compression Readings—1948 Pontiac

	Cyl. 1	Cyl. 2	Cyl. 3	Cyl. 4	Cyl. 5	Cyl. 6	Cyl. 7	Cyl. 8
Before	105 lbs.	95 lbs.	107 lbs.	120 lbs.	110 lbs.	115 lbs.	120 lbs.	123 lbs.
After	125 lbs.	120 lbs.	120 lbs.	125 lbs.	122 lbs.	120 lbs.	115 lbs.	116 lbs.

NOW ONLY
2.98

GET UP TO 50% MORE POWER

No labor cost—nothing else to buy

YOU RISK NOTHING

Just prove it for yourself at our risk. PEPGO Ring Seal is guaranteed. It cannot harm the finest car in any way. It can only improve and protect your motor. (Of course it will not correct mechanically defective parts.) Try PEPGO Ring Seal in your engine for a full 30 days. If you are not satisfied that everything we have led you to expect is absolutely true—just return the empty tube and we will refund the full purchase price.

MODERN MART, Dept. P-472
35 Wilbur St., Lynbrook, N. Y.

Rush tubes of PEPgo Ring Seal together with kit and easy instructions.

☐ 6 Cylinder cars (1 tube) \$2.98 ☐ 8 Cylinder cars (2 tubes) \$4.98

☐ Send C.O.D. I will pay postman on delivery plus a few cents postage. If I do not see immediate improvement, if after even 30 days' use I am not completely satisfied that I have gotten improved Pep, pickup, performance and economy for my car, I may return the empty tubes for prompt refund of the full purchase price.

☐ I enclose payment. Modern Mart will pay postage. Same Money Back Guarantee.

Name

Address

City State

NOW!
The Greatest
HOSPITALIZATION
VALUE
EVER OFFERED



Smiling and healthy today — in a Hospital bed tomorrow! Be ready!



Sky-high Hospital bills can wreck your life savings. Insure now!



We pay benefits for as long as you stay in Hospital. NO TIME LIMIT!

PROTECTS YOU and YOUR FAMILY
IN CASE OF SICKNESS or ACCIDENT..

No Time Limit HOSPITAL PLAN

PAYS BENEFITS FOR **FULL STAY** IN HOSPITAL

COSTS ONLY

**Pennies
a Day**

SO SUDDEN!



Policy Sold Only By Mail! Good Anywhere in U.S. & Possessions!

If sickness or accident puts you in a Hospital bed — you'll look back and thank your lucky stars you were wise enough to take out the "NO TIME LIMIT" Policy.

It's the sensible, practical way to protect your own bank account against the onslaught of high Hospital costs. So ACT TODAY! Do It before trouble strikes.

YOU CAN GET MATERNITY

For slight extra cost husband and wife can have a MATERNITY RIDER attached to their regular Policy and this will entitle the couple to a liberal Benefit for childbirth confinement and care.

HAPPY DAY!



POLICY BACKED BY STRONG RELIABLE COMPANY

We do business in all 48 states and U. S. possessions. Claims are paid promptly in strict accordance with Policy provisions.

LIFE INSURANCE CO. OF AMERICA

255-D Wilmington 99, Delaware

WHO'S NEXT?



**Mail
Coupon
for**

**FREE
BOOK**

NO OBLIGATION
NO AGENT WILL CALL

WE PAY CASH DIRECT TO YOU

IN ADDITION TO WHAT YOU MAY COLLECT FROM OTHER INSURANCE Go to the Hospital for a day, a week, a month, a year or longer — your "NO TIME LIMIT" Policy pays Benefits just as long as you stay — *there's absolutely no time limit!* What blessed help! What's more, the "NO TIME LIMIT" Policy pays off in cash direct to you — regardless of what you may collect from any other insurance policy for the same disability, including Workmen's Compensation. This is important — it means you can carry the low cost "NO TIME LIMIT" Policy IN ADDITION to any other insurance — then collect two ways in case of Hospital confinement.

ACCIDENTAL DEATH, SURGERY, POLIO INCLUDED

We give you more coverage, better coverage, longer coverage at low cost. You get generous Hospital Room and Board Benefits for sickness or accident (rest homes, sanitariums and Govt. Hospitals excluded) . . . you get Cash Benefits for 73 Surgical Operations . . . Lump Cash for accidental death . . . Cash Payment for loss of eyes, hands, feet . . . special Polio Protection, etc. One Policy covers individual or entire family, birth to age 75. You'll see the low costs in the booklet we send you. **DON'T TAKE CHANCES — BE PROTECTED.** Send for our FREE BOOK which tells all about this remarkable insurance. **DON'T WAIT TILL IT'S TOO LATE! ACT NOW!**

RUSH COUPON FOR VALUABLE FREE BOOK

LIFE INSURANCE CO. OF AMERICA

Dept. 255-D, Wilmington 99, Del.

Please send me, without obligation, full details about your new, low cost NO TIME LIMIT HOSPITAL Plan. No agent will call.

Name

Address

City Zone State

